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THE CATECHISM OF PERSEVERANCE

OR

An Historical, Dogmatical, Moral, Liturgical Apologetical, Philosophical, and Social Exposition of Religion,

FROM THE

BEGINNING OF THE WORLD DOWN TO OUR OWN DAYS

BY MONSIGNOR GAUME

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Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day; and the same for ever.—*Heb.* xiii., 8

God is charity.—1 *John*, iv., 8.

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CATECHISM OF PERSEVERANCE.

Part Third.

LESSON I.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Life of the Church an Everlasting Warfare. Picture of the First Century. Day of Pentecost. Address of St. Peter: his Doctrine confirmed by Miracles. Peter and John cast into prison. Church of Jerusalem. Ananias and Saphira. Election of seven Deacons. Martyrdom of St. Stephen: Advantages of this Death and of Persecution. Preaching of the Gospel in Palestine. Simon the Magician. Conversion of St. Paul.

THE history of the four thousand years that precede the coming of the Messias may be summed up in these three lines:—

ALL FOR CHRIST.
CHRIST FOR MAN.[1]
MAN FOR GOD.

The history of the eighteen centuries that have rolled by since the birth of the Messias, and of all those which shall roll by till the end of time, may also be summed up in three lines:—

ALL FOR CHRIST.
CHRIST FOR MAN.
MAN FOR GOD.

From this admirable philosophy, with which everything may be explained, and without which nothing can be explained, it follows that the salvation of the human race through Jesus Christ is the

[1] Christ for Man! This truth belongs to Faith. Lest we should ever forget it, the Catholic Church proclaims it Sunday after Sunday in every region of the globe: *Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de cœlis*, &c.

term of the divine action in time ; that Christianity, instead of being a nonentity in the world, as the indifferent of our days assert, is the centre towards which all things tend, is the pivot around which the universe revolves; that, properly speaking, there is but one history, the history of Christianity, of which all national histories are only episodes. As in the heavens it is to one sun that all the planets gravitate, so in the moral order there is only one kingdom to which all other kingdoms refer.

Before the coming of the Redeemer, the great design of God is to bring about His birth according to the times and places foretold by the Prophets and determined from all eternity in the divine counsels.

After His coming, the great design of God is to establish, to preserve, to spread throughout the world, to individualise for every man, the work of the Redemption.

Hitherto we have seen events, empires, kings, and peoples contributing, under the hand of God, whether knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, to the glory of the Messias. The same spectacle still awaits us on the long road that we are about to travel. But this establishment of the kingdom of the Messias, its propagation, and its preservation will not take place without an effort: the life of the Church must be an everlasting warfare. Established to continue the mission of her Divine Spouse, that is, to take away the sins of the world, the Catholic Church will accomplish her passage over the earth, sword in hand. It follows hence that the sad consequences of this unceasing warfare—divisions, hatreds, revolutions, torrents of blood—will not be imputable to her ; for it was not she that began the warfare—it was the devil. It was he that, in the terrestrial paradise, usurped the dominion of God over man and creatures.

From that moment the Church might say what she says to all heretics in the course of ages, " Why do you lay your scythe on my crop ? Who gave you the right to free quarters here ? These souls which you have bowed down under your yoke, this world in which you have sown the cockle of error and vice, belong to me, because they belong to God, my Spouse and my Father. He gave them to me after creating them, that I might preserve them for Him, and return them to Him safe on the last day. I am the first in possession; I am the daughter of the lawful owner: my titles are genuine, and I easily prove my descent. Unjustly treated, I am resolved to reclaim my imprescriptible rights and to drive out the usurper. I only defend myself. On you, therefore, be all the fatal consequences of this conflict: you are the assailant, you are always the assailant, because you are an after-comer ; and you are

an after-comer because you are not the lawful owner." This truth, that the Catholic Church, though continually at war, never attacks, gives occasion to a multitude of senseless diatribes, which shallow minds send forth or take in as grave accusations.

The author of evil continually varies his plans of attack, so as to recover from the Church a portion of her noble conquests, or to keep her from making new ones; but he is always vanquished.

Hence, every century will present us with two armies face to face. On the one side, evil, error, the devil, the usurper of the Father of the Family's field; on the other, truth, goodness, the Church, or rather the Son of the Father of the Family, ever living in the Church and maintaining the interests of His Father. On the one side, Satan and his standard; on the other, Jesus Christ and His cross!

Let us give a sketch of the first century. The devil, seeing the Church approach with a divine strength, to snatch from him the sceptre that he has usurped, sounds the alarm. To his standard flock the Jews, whose figurative worship is threatened with immediate abolition, and the pagans, whose gods already tremble on their altars; also, a host of heretics—Nicolites, Ebionites, Cerinthians, and others. Against the army of the devil, Jesus Christ opposes His twelve fishermen and their new disciples. The conflict is unceasing, bloody; but not for a moment is the issue doubtful: Christianity is everywhere the conqueror. Millions of pagans are seen hastening to replace the Jews, who refuse to submit to the truth; and the true God is known far beyond the limits of Judea.

To confirm the courage of His timid Apostles, the Son of God had informed them beforehand of this endless war, saying, "I am come to cast a sword into the world. Henceforth, all shall be war: war between father and mother, husband and wife, brother and sister. You shall be the objects of every kind of attack; but fear not: all power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. You shall give testimony of Me in Jerusalem, in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Go, teach and baptise all nations: behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of time!" Instructed in a divine school, the Apostles were thoroughly acquainted with all the truths that they had to teach. Yet, to be not only preachers, but also martyrs in support of these holy truths, they required the help of God. Hence the Saviour, when leaving them, was careful to give them this last advice: Undertake nothing for a while, but remain in prayer until you are endued with power from on high.

Full of confidence in the words of their Master, the disciples came down from Mount Olivet, whence Jesus had just ascended into Heaven, and, accompanied by the Blessed Virgin, returned to Jerusalem. They shut themselves up in an Upper Chamber, that is to say, in a retired apartment, where nothing might disturb their recollection or diminish their fervour, making ready thus for their dread ministry, and invoking the Divine Spirit who should by them regenerate the world. Never were the gifts of God more worthily sought, and we cannot anywhere learn better than in this school how they may be deserved.

Yet all the time was not employed in prayer. The Saviour had said to His Apostles, when choosing them as the twelve patriarchs of the Christian people, that at the time of the regeneration, when the Son of Man should be seated on the throne of His majesty, they themselves should be seated on twelve thrones, from which they should judge the twelve tribes of Israel. One of these twelve thrones was vacant by the apostasy and wretched end of Judas: it should be filled. It was proper to fill it before the Holy Ghost, whose effusion Jesus had promised them, should descend on the Apostolic College. Peter arose, therefore, in the midst of the assembly, composed of about a hundred and twenty disciples, and said that they should provide a successor for Judas, of whose treachery and tragic death he reminded them in a few words. Among those who have been in the company of the Lord Jesus, he added, during all the time that He lived with us, counting from the baptism of John till the day when Our Divine Master left us to re-ascend to Heaven, choose out one who with us may render testimony to the truth of His resurrection. Two subjects were presented: Joseph, surnamed the Just, and Matthias.

Both were worthy of the apostleship, if the apostleship could be merited; but neither the assembled disciples, nor the ancient Apostles, nor Peter himself, would venture to give a decision on the matter. It was agreed to refer the election to the Lord, and all present addressed together this fervent prayer to Him: Do Thou, O Lord, who seest the depths of hearts, make known to us which of these two Thou hast chosen! The prayer being over, they cast lots. The lot fell on Matthias, who immediately took his place among the Apostles.

Meanwhile, the retreat of the disciples was drawing to its close: the ever memorable Day of Pentecost dawned upon the world. About nine o'clock in the morning, the time when the oblation of new-wheaten loaves is being made in the temple, there is suddenly heard from Heaven the sound as of a mighty wind, which fills the whole house where the Apostles are assembled. To this first

prodigy succeeds another, still more surprising and expressive. They behold parted tongues, as it were of fire, which come and rest on the heads of all of them—an admirable symbol of the unity of belief and love which is about to reign throughout the world—and they are all filled with the Holy Ghost. From this moment the Church is animated with its divine and immortal life, and the twelve fishermen of Galilee become the Apostles of the Son of God and co-operators in His ministry.

Changed into new men, freed from all their old weaknesses, courageous as lions, and burning with zeal, they begin to speak different languages, according to the impulse of the Holy Ghost.

The fame of the prodigy soon spread through the city. Now, on this day, Jerusalem overflowed with a countless multitude of the children of Abraham. They had come this year from all parts of the world, and in greater numbers than usual, because there was a conviction throughout the whole East that the Messias was about to appear. The crowd rushed to the Apostles, in order to witness the prodigy. All asked in their astonishment, "Are not these men who speak Galileans? How does it come to pass that we all hear them speak at the same time in the language of our own country?" Now there were there Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, of the mountains of Cilicia, of Cappadocia, of Pontus, of Proconsular Asia (of which Ephesus was the capital), of Phrygia, of Egypt, and of the parts of Lybia about Cyrene; also Romans, Jews, Arabians, and Cretes.

In the sight of all these people, Peter, accompanied by the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke thus: The miracle which surprises you is the accomplishment of the prediction of Joel. Behold, said the Lord, by the mouth of this prophet, how, in the last days of the reign of the synagogue, I will pour forth My Spirit on all flesh. I will then show prodigies in Heaven and on earth, and your children shall prophesy. He next announced to them the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, adding that those who should believe in the Lord would escape this dreadful catastrophe; also, that Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, was truly the Messias promised to their forefathers; and exhorted them to be baptised in His name, in order to receive the pardon of their sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Three thousand persons were converted and baptised on the spot: such was the wondrous effect of this first sermon. And then, what new progidies were brought about by grace in so many hearts! We see these Faithful of one day docile to the instructions of the Apostles, assiduous at prayer, communing together in the breaking of bread, that is to say, partaking in common of the Body and

Blood of Our Lord, really present under the species of bread, and spreading around them by the charm of their virtues the good odour of God, whose children by adoption they have happily become.

God confirmed the doctrine of the Apostles and the faith of the new believers by a great many miracles, which kept the whole city in a state of respectful awe. One day Peter and John were going up to the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon: this was the time of public prayer for the children of Israel. Already the poor were coming to the gates of the temple to ask an alms. At all times it has been supposed that those who most frequent the House of God are also the most charitable.

A man, forty years old, who had been born lame and who could make no use of his legs, used to have himself carried thither every day. He was placed at that gate of the temple which was called the Beautiful Gate, and he begged relief from those who entered. Seeing Peter and John, he asked them for an alms. The two Apostles fixed their eyes upon him, and Peter said to him, Look upon us! Convinced that he was about to receive something, the lame man gazed on them attentively. Gold and silver, says Peter to him, I have none; but what I have, I give you: in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and walk! While uttering these words, Peter takes the man by the hand and helps him to rise. Immediately his legs are strengthened: he begins to walk and leap. Fully assured of his cure, he enters the temple with the Apostles, and begins anew to leap in presence of all the people and to bless God.

Never was there a more certain miracle. Admiration seized all hearts, and, if we may so speak, caused a general ecstasy. A crowd gathered round the two Apostles. Peter availed himself of the opportunity to preach the Gospel again. This second discourse was so efficacious, that it converted five thousand persons.

The sacrificators and the officer of the temple, provoked at such amazing success, arrested the Apostles and cast them into prison. Peter and John spent the night there; but, with the loss of their liberty, they lost none of their courage. They were no longer those men whom the very sight of their Master's enemies or the voice of a woman could terrify. Next day the Sanhedrim, which was the supreme council of the nation, assembled, and, the two Apostles being brought before it, inquired by what authority they were acting. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, answered boldly: Since it is on account of the good that has been done to the infirm man that we are interrogated this day, and that we have to declare in whose name he has been cured, know ye all, Princes and Priests, and let all Israel learn with you, that it is in the name of Our Lord

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God has raised up from the dead, that this man has been cured.

The whole council was struck with astonishment on witnessing the firmness of the Apostles, whom it supposed to be only ordinary men. Moreover, the miracle was indisputable. After deliberating upon the matter, the judges forbade them to teach any more in the name of Jesus. Peter and John answered with a holy intrepidity, "Judge yourselves whether it is just to obey you rather than God: can we be silent regarding what we have seen and heard, when God commands us to make it known?" Great threats were uttered against them; nevertheless, they were allowed to depart.

On returning to the Faithful, the two Apostles related all that had just occurred. The whole assembly returned thanks to God, animating one another to proclaim louder than ever the divinity of the Saviour Jesus.

Never has the world seen anything more admirable than this Church of Jerusalem. All virtues shone in it: especially did charity, the great virtue of Christians, reign there with an absolute sway. The Faithful sold their goods, and brought the money to the feet of the Apostles, who placed it in common. There were no poor among them: all together had but one property, one heart, one soul.

However, one of these Faithful, named Ananias, in concert with Saphira his wife, was guilty of a lie, apparently very trivial. This man had a field. He sold it, and secretly kept back a portion of the money: the rest he brought to the feet of the Apostles. Peter said to him, "Ananias, why have you let Satan tempt your heart, so far as to make you lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back some of the price that you received for your field? The inheritance was yours: no one forced you to sell it. It is not to men, but to God, that you have lied." The moment the guilty man heard these words, he fell dead at the Apostle's feet. You may judge of the holy fear with which this sudden death inspired all the Faithful. Some young men present carried away the body, and, according to usage, buried it outside the city.

Peter continued his instruction: it lasted for nearly three hours. He was still speaking when the wife of Ananias, who knew nothing of what had occurred, made her appearance. "Tell me," said St. Peter to her, "is the money which you see here all that you obtained for the sale of your field?" "Yes," she answered. "Why, then," said the Apostle, "did you agree with your husband to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, I hear those coming who have buried your husband: they are at the door; they will take you also to your grave." At these words, Saphira fell to the

ground and died. The young men who had buried her husband bore her away to his side.

This twofold example of severity had its effect: all were penetrated with a sense of the greatness of God and the dreadfulness of His justice. Every day increased the number of the Faithful. Jerusalem was gradually changing its face. Perhaps it would have become wholly Christian, if its rulers had not been for the most part wicked men, irreligious masters. They only strove to crush what they termed the new sect; but the means by which the Gospel spread in spite of them disconcerted all their measures. These means were continual and visible miracles. Peter in particular wrought them without knowing it: so much so that the sick were brought out into the streets, they were laid on their beds in public places, that, Peter passing, his shadow at least might fall on some of these unhappy sufferers and they should be restored to health. From all the neighbouring cities people flocked to Jerusalem: thither were brought the infirm and the possessed, and all were cured.

How could the synagogue endure this progress of the Gospel? The High-Priest, mad with vexation, cast the Apostles into prison; but an Angel delivered them and commanded them to go and preach the word of God boldly in the temple. There they were again seized, to be brought before the council of the nation. "We forbade you," says the High-Priest to them, "to teach in the name of this man, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you wish to bring the blood of this man on our heads." Ah, how iniquity lies to itself! Prince of the Priests: were not you among the first to ask that this blood should fall on your head and the heads of your children? Why do you now fear it? If, as you maintained before Pilate and the people, Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, how does it happen that you fear the consequences of your just sentence?

Not at all intimidated, Peter answered, "We must obey God rather than men." This answer, full of dignity and truth, so provoked these unjust judges, that they thought of mixing the blood of the disciples with that of their Master. But a member of the council, named Gamaliel, opening his lips, reasoned with them thus, "Let these people alone: if their project is the work of men, it will fall to the ground of itself; if it is the work of God, in vain do you strive to arrest its progress."

Gamaliel's advice was adopted. The council drew back from the sentence of death that it was about to pronounce; but it shamefully scourged the Apostles, severely forbidding them ever again to speak in the name of Jesus. After this, they were set at liberty. Far from being dejected or discouraged, the Apostles went away

rejoicing that they had been thought worthy to suffer an outrage for the name of their Master. Who can lay chains on the rays of the sun? In like manner, who can lay chains on tongues that God Himself unchains? Heedless of the ill-treatment and the prohibition of the synagogue, the Apostles continued no less to proclaim the divinity of the Saviour.

Till this time they had been charged with the care of distributing among the Faithful the alms of which they were the depositaries. But the number of disciples daily increasing, the Apostles said to them,—It is not right that we should abandon the preaching of the word of God to attend to the service of tables, and to regulate the details of what should be furnished to every person. Look out among you, and choose seven men of good character, filled with the Holy Ghost and endowed with the gift of wisdom, that we may intrust this employment to them. As for us, we will divide our time between prayer and the preaching of the word.

The proposal of the Apostles was accepted unanimously. An election followed, and the lot fell on Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. The choice was ratified by the Apostles. They all prayed together over the newly elected, and, imposing hands, conferred on them the order of Deaconship, instituted by Jesus Christ to give inferior ministers to Bishops and Priests, in the holy functions attached to their dignity.

Stephen, the first of the seven Deacons, was a man full of the Holy Ghost. God performed, by his ministry, a multitude of miracles, which rapidly propagated the Gospel. The members of the synagogue wanted to dispute with him; but Stephen so confounded them that they determined to have his life. False witnesses were paid to say that Stephen had blasphemed against Moses and against God. The council of the nation assembled again: the innocent man was condemned to death. He was seized and led to the place of punishment. While they were stoning the martyr, he invoked God, and said, Lord Jesus, receive my soul! Then, falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, for they know not what they do! After these words, he slept in the Lord. Thus had the chief of all the martyrs died on Calvary: thus should die the first of His imitators and the model of a million others.

Stephen, triumphing in Heaven, was not to be pitied. The Church herself, though she lost by his death a minister worthy of her, gained in a certain sense by her loss. God had so disposed of events that, a persecution breaking out at this time, the word of God, confined since Pentecost within the precincts of Jerusalem

was spread abroad through the provinces; and hence it may be truly said that the blood of martyrs was the seed of Christians.

We do not know how long the persecution against the holy Church of Jerusalem lasted, nor how many innocent victims it sacrificed. All that we know is that one of the most active persecutors was a young man, named Saul, who held the garments of those that stoned Stephen. An earnest follower of the Pharisees and the High-Priests, he obtained ample powers from them. We learn from himself that he visited in Jerusalem all the houses that he suspected of Christianity: he dragged to prison such men and women as confessed Jesus Christ; he caused them to be cruelly tortured, and even passed sentence of death on them, securing its speedy execution. This violence could not frighten the Apostles. They remained steadfast at Jerusalem, but they obliged the new disciples to scatter themselves through the various regions of Judea and Samaria: a dispersion which became the salvation of peoples!

While the Apostles, remaining in Jerusalem, cultivated their first conquests, the disciples spread over the country preached to all the Israelites the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, the furious storm which seemed about to annihilate the Infant Church, was only a favourable breeze that carried afar off the good seed. So it has been with all persecutions, as the centuries will prove to us.

The Deacon Philip went down to Samaria and preached in the city where he stayed. His discourses, supported by the miracles which he repeated day after day, disposed minds to receive the Gospel; but a famous magician, named Simon, had so prejudiced them that it required time to dissipate their illusions. Philip succeeded so happily that he converted both the people seduced and the seducer himself. Simon renounced magic, confessed Jesus Christ, and received Baptism. As soon as the holy Deacon saw his work prospering, he hastened to give an account of it to the Apostles, whom the news filled with joy. As Philip had not the power to impose hands, that is, to give Confirmation to the newly baptised, the Church of Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria in order to administer this Sacrament.

In these early days of the Infant Church, God often added to the invisible impressions of His Spirit some sensible gifts that appeared outwardly, such as the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues. This wondrous spectacle awoke the curiosity of Simon. Nothing seemed to him more glorious or desirable than the power to communicate to others these extraordinary gifts. He offered the Apostles a sum of money, saying, "Give me the power to make the Holy Ghost descend on those upon whom I shall impose hands." "Let thy money," replied St. Peter, "perish with thee, since thou

hast thought that the gift of God might be purchased for money. Thou canst not pretend to this ministry, for thy heart is not right before God." Simon did not profit of this remonstrance. On the contrary, he became the personal enemy of the Apostles. The disgrace of his crime has ever remained attached to his memory, and, after eighteen hundred years, we still designate by his name a traffic in holy things, introduced by his impiety.

The Apostles, having done in Samaria what they had proposed to themselves for the glory of Religion, returned to Jerusalem. Philip continued his mission, and converted one of the ministers of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, a man who had come to adore in Jerusalem. He next travelled through all the country from Azotus to Cæsarea. Peace was still reigning in these remote parts; but it was not yet re-established in the capital. The public hatred there was always equally fired, and Paul continued to serve it with the same ardour

One day as he was wholly intent on his schemes against the disciples of Jesus crucified, he learned that a considerable number of Israelites at Damascus had left Moses to follow Jesus Christ. Immediately he went in search of the High-Priest, and asked him for letters to the synagogues of this city, with authority to arrest the prevaricators, and to bring them in chains to Jerusalem. His proposal was warmly received, and he set out for Damascus, accompanied by some officers under his orders. As a tiger thirsting for blood runs to a sheep-fold, so Saul hurried forward, breathing only bloodshed and slaughter, when suddenly he was stopped.

At noon on a beautiful day, he says himself, when relating his conversion to King Agrippa, I was dazzled with a light from heaven: it wholly surrounded me as well as the troop that I led. Struck as by a thunderbolt, we all fell to the ground. At the same time I heard a voice, saying to me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Lord, I answered, who art Thou? I am, replied the voice, Jesus of Nazareth, on whom thou makest war. Be obstinate no longer: it will cost thee dear to kick against the goad. Trembling and confused I had only strength to say these few words: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Arise, said the Lord to me, and go to Damascus: there thou shalt learn what thou shalt have to do. Those who were with me led me by the hand to Damascus. I remained there for three days without eating or drinking.

Now there was at Damascus a disciple of Jesus, named Ananias. The Lord appeared to him and said, Go into the street that is called Strait-street, and seek in the house of Judas a man named Saul, from Tarsus. Lord, replied Ananias, I have heard of all the evils that he has done to Thy Saints in Jerusalem, and he is come to Damascus to seize all those who invoke Thy name. Go, Ananias,

said the Lord; fear not. I have made of Saul a vessel of election, to carry My name before the Gentiles, and their kings, and before the children of Israel. Ananias, reassured, set out at the same hour. Having entered the house, he laid his hands on the eyes of Saul and said to him, Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way, has sent me to you that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Ananias was yet speaking when there fell as it were scales from Saul's eyes. Saul recovered his sight and received Baptism.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having chosen the Apostles to announce Thy Gospel, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. Grant me the grace to receive Thy holy word with the same docility as the Faithful of Jerusalem.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will study this Third Part of the Catechism carefully.*

LESSON II.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Gospel passes to the Gentiles. Baptism of Cornelius the Centurion. Missions of St. Peter to Cæsarea; to Antioch; through Asia; to Rome, where he encounters Simon the Magician; to Jerusalem, where he is cast into prison by order of Herod Agrippa and delivered by an Angel; to Rome, where St. Mark writes his Gospel; to Jerusalem, where he presides at the First Council; finally, to Rome again. Missions of St. Paul to Damascus, to Cæsarea, to Antioch, through Cyprus, to Iconium, to Lystra, to Philippi.

THE Apostles, who had accompanied the Saviour during His public life, had been specially appointed to cultivate Palestine. But the synagogue grew more hardened from day to day, and the deicide people rapidly filled up that measure of iniquity which should bring on them their ruin. The Sun of Justice, which had risen on Judea, was not for this purpose extinguished: it should pass to other peoples and enlighten new regions. This wondrous transfer of the Gospel is the subject of which we are now about to speak.

Represent to yourself a bright furnace, whence proceed twelve rays, which, going in different directions, extend to the ends of the earth, and you will have an idea of the Propagation of the Faith. This bright furnace is the Upper Chamber, is the

Church of Jerusalem. These twelve rays are the twelve Apostles. Quitting Jerusalem, some go to the East, others to the West; some to the North, others to the South. Even the most distant ends of the earth receive the visit of some one of these new conquerors. Let us give the biography of each of them, while we study their rapid marches. We shall trace them by their benefits and their blood.

We begin with Peter. As we have said, the Jews were about to be rejected, and the pagans called to the Gospel; but it was necessary that Peter should open the door for the latter. The leader of the whole flock, the supreme pastor of strangers as well as of the children of the kingdom, he should everywhere appear first. One day, therefore, as he was in prayer, God made known to him that the moment had come to bring the nations into the fold of the Divine Shepherd. At the same time there was in Cæsarea a Roman officer, named Cornelius, commander of one of the cohorts of the Italian legion. He was a most religious man, full of the fear of God; and his abundant alms were accompanied with fervent prayers. The Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Cornelius, your prayers and alms have ascended to the throne of God. Send to Joppe for a man named Simon and surnamed Peter. He lodges with another Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side. It is from him that you shall learn what you have to do." The Angel having disappeared, Cornelius called two of his servants, and a soldier who feared the Lord, and sent them immediately to Joppe. As the distance from Cæsarea to Joppe was nearly fifty miles, the messengers did not reach their journey's end till the next day about noon.

Up to this moment the Lord had not revealed to Peter the designs of His Providence. But when the messengers from Cornelius were drawing near the town, Peter went up, according to his custom, to the platform of the house, that he might spend some time in prayer before taking his repast. His prayer being ended, he was hungry and asked for something to eat. While it was being prepared, he was suddenly ravished in mind. He saw heaven opened, and as it were a great linen sheet descending to the earth, let down by the four corners. This sheet was full of all kinds of four-footed beasts, reptiles of the earth, and fowls of the air.

The sheet having come close to the Apostle, a voice was heard, saying, "Arise, Peter; kill of these animals, and eat without distinction or choice." "Ah, Lord," answered Peter, "I will take care not to do so, I who have all my life observed the Law to the letter, and have never tasted anything impure or unclean." The voice replied, "Be not so rash as to call impure or unclean what

the Lord has purified." The vision was repeated a second and a third time; and each time did Peter receive the same command, make the same answer, and hear the same warning. The sheet was taken back to heaven, and Peter returned from his ecstasy.

He was endeavouring to understand the mystery when the messengers from Cornelius, presenting themselves at the abode of Simon the tanner, asked if it was there that Simon, surnamed Peter, lodged. While they were yet speaking, Peter made his appearance. They explained to him the object of their visit, and begged him to follow them to Cæsarea. The arrival of these Gentiles had a sensible connexion with the revelation. Peter understood that thenceforth there should be no further distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and that these two peoples should form but one fold. He received the messengers kindly, and set out with them for Cæsarea, where he baptised the virtuous officer and all his family. Such were the happy first-fruits of the Church of the Nations.

From Cæsarea Peter went to Antioch, where the Gospel was making rapid progress; it was here that the disciples of the Saviour were first called Christians. This name had no other meaning than what was honourable among the Gentiles. It did not yet draw tortures in its train; and, while the Jews were blaspheming it in Jerusalem, it was respected in the centre of idolatry. According to the division of the world which the twelve fishermen made among themselves, St. Peter was destined to carry the Gospel to the capital of the Roman Empire; but he did not immediately execute his design: the moment of Providence had not arrived. While awaiting it, he was, by the common consent of the Apostles, established Bishop of Antioch, the capital of Syria. It is believed that he ruled this Church for seven years: this does not mean that he constantly remained here. As a matter of fact, the indefatigable Apostle preached during this time to the Jews scattered through all Asia, in Pontus, in Galatia, in Bithynia, and in Cappadocia. Notwithstanding these painful labours, the Vicar of the Son of God led an exceedingly frugal life. St. Gregory Nazianzen tells us that he was content with eating daily a halfpenny-worth of lupins, which are a kind of peas or beans.[1]

Meanwhile Herod, surnamed Agrippa, had renewed the persecution against the Christians: he had already put to death St. James, the brother of St. John the Evangelist. To this unjust death, he wished to add that of St. Peter. The Chief Pastor of the Church, having returned to Jerusalem, was therefore arrested and

[1] *Orat.* xvi. p. 241.

cast into a narrow prison, bound by a double chain. Here he was guarded by sixteen soldiers, divided into four bands, so as to succeed one another. Two were near the prisoner day and night: perhaps he was even fastened to them by his chains, according to the usual manner of the Romans. The other two kept sentry before the door.

All the precautions of Agrippa served only to render more evident the new miracle which God was pleased to operate. The Church of Jerusalem betook itself to prayer for the deliverance of its father, and it was heard. On the very night before the day fixed for the torture of St. Peter, an Angel descended into the prison, awoke the Apostle, whom a danger so near could not keep from sleeping, and told him to dress and come away. At the same time the Angel burst his chains, opened the doors for him, and led him, through the midst of the guards, by a light visible to him alone, as far as the iron gate opening on the city; he also led him along a street, and then disappeared. St. Peter, who had heretofore regarded all that was passing as a dream, now at length understood that God had really delivered him.

Recognising the place where he stood, he went and knocked at the gate of the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark,[1] where a great number of the Faithful were engaged in prayer. A servant-maid, named Rhode, goes to hearken. She recognises Peter's voice. Surprise and joy fill her soul; and, without thinking of letting him in, she runs to say to the Christians, "Peter is at the gate." "You are mad," they say to her. "Not at all," she says, "I am sure of it." "You deceive yourself," they add; "it is his Good Angel." Meanwhile Peter, whom Rhode has left in the street, continues knocking. The gate is opened. He enters. He is known. It is needless to inquire how great were the surprise and joy of the Faithful. You may form some idea of it by the affection that they bore him. Peter made a sign with his hand for them to be silent, and he related to them how God had delivered him.

When day came, Agrippa was told that his prisoner had escaped, and he examined the soldiers regarding the affair; but, being unable to learn anything from them, he commanded them to be put to death. The Church, which had asked of God the deliverance of its chief, by so many prayers, annually returns Him thanks for it on the 1st of August, the Feast of *St. Peter in Chains.*

The Apostle, miraculously delivered, left Jerusalem as soon as possible, and made his way to the maritime frontier of Judea. He

[1] St. John Mark was a disciple and cousin of St. Barnabas.

visited the young Churches and established Bishops, everywhere distributing the benefits of His doctrine and miracles. Enriched by so many spoils wrested from the devil, Peter resolved to go and encounter him even in Rome. O wonder! The very man who lately trembled before a maid-servant, is now not afraid to enter a city that is like an immense forest full of wild beasts: his courage on this occasion is greater than when he walked on the waves of the sea. But whence came so much intrepidity to him? From the ardent love with which the Divine Master had inspired him for His sheep, when intrusting them to him. Peter therefore directed his steps towards Rome, by the advice of the other Apostles, who had destined him for the capital of the world, in order that the light of truth might thence spread more rapidly and effectually, no part of the Empire being ignorant of what was occurring at Rome.

It was in the second year of the reign of the Emperor Claudius, the forty-fourth of Jesus Christ, that the Galilean fisherman entered the city of the Cæsars. He planted the sacred tree of the Gospel in the very centre of idolatry. As this new tree was yet weak, God, to give it leisure to grow in peace, inspired the Emperor Claudius with a spirit of kindness and consideration for the peoples, and enabled him to crush in a few days some dangerous revolts that threatened the overthrow of the Empire. Thus the State itself profited by the favour which God did the city of Rome in sending His Apostle thither.

Among other conversions which St. Peter wrought during this first visit we count those of the senator Pudens, and his wife Priscilla, with their two sons, Novatus and Timothy, and their two illustrious daughters, Praxedes and Pudentiana.[1] Lodging in the house of this excellent family, the Apostle celebrated there the divine mysteries, ordained Priests, consecrated the first church of Rome—that is to say, the first place where the Christians used to assemble—and contended with Simon the Magician.[2] Instead of profiting by the reprimand that St. Peter had given him in Samaria, this impostor had become more hardened than ever. He devoted himself earnestly to magic, travelled through various provinces, and, inspired by the devil, went to Rome under the Emperor Claudius, in order to be the first to seize the capital of the world He did so many wonderful things there, that he was ranked among the gods by the Senate.[3] St. Peter shook the impostor's credit, but his victory was not complete till later on.

Meanwhile the Apostle availed himself of his residence in Rome

[1] Baron., 44. Euseb., l. II, c. xiv.
[2] Just., Apol., ii, p. 69; Euseb. l. II, c. xiv.

to write his first letter. It is addressed to the Faithful of Pontus, Galatia, Asia, and Cappadocia. Though particularly intended for the converted Jews scattered throughout these provinces, it speaks also to the Gentiles who have embraced the Faith. We find in it a dignity and a vigour worthy of the Prince of the Apostles.[1]

The chief companions of the Head of the Church in this first journey were St. Apollinaris, whom he consecrated Bishop of Ravenna; St. Martial, whom he sent among the Gauls; Rufus, whom he established Bishop of Capua;[2] and the best known of all, St. Mark the Evangelist. This last, while staying in Rome, wrote a Gospel, at the entreaty of the Christians, and especially of the Roman knights to whom St. Peter had announced Jesus Christ.[3] After writing it—almost at the dictation of St. Peter—Mark bore it to Egypt, whither he was sent by the Head of the Church.

The fisherman of Galilee had laboured for about seven years to extend the reign of the Cross in the very capital of the Cæsars, when, in the year 51 of Jesus Christ, the eleventh of the Emperor Claudius, an edict obliged all Jews to leave Rome. St. Peter set out, therefore, for the East, and went to celebrate the Feast of the Pasch in Jerusalem. The same year he presided at the Council which was held in this city, and which decided that Gentiles converted to the Faith should not be obliged to submit to Mosaic observances, as some Jews that had become Christians wished. The Apostles express their decision, to which the whole Church yields, with these memorable words, *It hath appeared good to the Holy Ghost and to us*, which show the supreme power and the infallibility of the Apostolic College. After the Council of Jerusalem, St. Peter continued with the same ardour to rule and to feed the lambs and the sheep.

About five years after his departure from Rome, that is to say, in the fifty-sixth year of Jesus Christ and the third of Nero, he returned to Rome, never more to leave it. The arrival of St. Peter in the capital of the world served Religion much there; but the devil, enraged to see his empire declining day by day, tried every means that cunning and hatred could suggest to stay the progress of the Gospel. Nero, his worthy minister, kindled a violent persecution, which was to procure for St. Peter the crown of martyrdom.

The Saviour, who, after the Resurrection, had revealed to him the manner in which he should glorify God in his old age, made

[1] This is the remark of a Protestant. (See Grotius, *in Epist. Petr.*, i; t, VIII, *Critic Sacr.*, p. 117.)

[2] Baron., an. 44.

[3] Euseb., l. II c. xv.

known to him at a later date the time and the place thereof. Considering now that he should soon quit his mortal body, St. Peter wished to profit of the little time that remained to him, to rouse the piety of the Faithful, and to remind them of the truths which he had taught them. With this view he wrote his Second Epistle. Like the First, it is addressed to the Faithful of Pontus and Asia, and forms, if we may so speak, the last will of the Head of the Church.

Before relating the death of St. Peter, we must speak of him who was to be his glorious companion in it and to share his victory as he had shared his battles. This new conqueror, come forth from Judea to subject the world to the sway of the Cross, is called Saul. Born at Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, he was of the race of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin. He was also by birth a Roman citizen; for the inhabitants of Tarsus, who had always entertained a great affection for the house of the Cæsars, having suffered cruel things while Cassius, one of the murderers of Julius Cæsar, was master of Asia, Augustus thought himself bound to recompense them. To the honours and benefits with which he gratified them, he added the right of Roman citizenship.

The young Saul was sent to Jerusalem, and brought up by a celebrated doctor named Gamaliel. It was a very common practice among the Jews to make those who were studying the holy books learn a trade, either that they might always have a means of earning a livelihood, or that they might avoid the disorders which spring from idleness. Hence it may be supposed that it was during this time that he learned the trade of tent-maker, which he practised even while preaching the Gospel. A zealous Pharisee, Saul declared himself a persecutor of the Christians; but, having been converted, as we have seen, on the road to Damascus, he became a most ardent propagator of the Gospel.

The conversion of the Gentiles was his mission. He first preached at Damascus, and then withdrew to Arabia. After an abode there of some three years, he returned to Damascus. The Jews, unable to witness any longer the advantages which the Church derived from his conversion and his sermons, resolved to put him to death: Saul was informed of it. The disciples, who feared for his life, let him down in a basket during the night from a window in the city wall Freed from danger, Saul took the way to Jerusalem in order to see St. Peter: it was right that before setting out on his great mission he should render homage to the Head of the Church.

From Jerusalem, Saul went to Cæsarea and then into Cilicia. He spent some time too at Tarsus, where he had been born. It was

hither that his friend, St. Barnabas, who had been preaching at Antioch, came desiring to take part in his labours. "He came seeking him," says St John Chrysostom, "not only as a particular friend, but as a general of the Christian army, as a lion, as a shining lamp, as a mouth capable of being heard throughout the whole earth."[1] Saul remained a full year at Antioch. His preaching, blessed with abundant fruit, obtained for this city an honour which rendered it illustrious in every part of the world. It was here, as we have said, that the disciples began to bear the name of Christians: this name was given them by the Apostles themselves.

While Saul was at Antioch, a great famine occurred in the East: the year was the fourth of the Emperor Claudius, the forty-fourth of Jesus Christ. God, who would turn all events to the establishment of the Gospel, found in this famine a means to show the conduct of Christians commendable, and to unite the Gentiles, who formed the greater portion of the Church of Antioch, with the Jews who had embraced the Faith in Judea. The latter had either renounced their property or been despoiled of it: the Faithful of Antioch resolved to come to their assistance. Saul and Barnabas were charged to convey the alms contributed by them. Having set out for Jerusalem, they delivered the same into the hands of the priests for distribution.

On their return to Antioch, the two missionaries received the imposition of hands, and resolved to quit this dear city, where the Faith was now well planted and sufficiently grown. They directed their course to the island of Cyprus, whose governor was then the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a wise and prudent man. Desirous to hear the word of God, he sent for Saul and Barnabas. But he had near him a Jew, a magician and false prophet, named Bar-Jesu, who opposed the Apostles and did everything in his power to prevent the proconsul from embracing the Faith. Saul deprived this man of sight, and reduced him to the necessity of seeking some one to lead him about. Struck by so great a miracle, the proconsul was converted It is also believed that by this blindness, which was only temporary, God softened the heart of Bar-Jesu, gave him the spirit of repentance, and opened the eyes of his soul with those of his body, that he might see both the Sun which enlightens the intellectual world and the sun which enlightens the material world.[2] In memory of the conversion of the proconsul, Saul took the name of Paul, and wished to indicate hereby the glorious triumph which Jesus Christ had won by the weak ministry of the last of His Apostles.

Paul and Barnabas advanced continually to new conquests.

[1] Chrys., *Homil.* xxv. [2] Orig. *in Exod.*, xvi

After travelling on their evangelical mission through a great part of Asia Minor, they arrived at Iconium. It was here, according to common tradition, that the Apostle of nations converted St. Thecla, and induced her to consecrate her virginity to God. At Lystra he cured a man who was a cripple, who had never walked. The miracle was wrought thus. Among his numerous auditors, Paul remarked this infirm man. Enlightened by a divine light, he read in the poor man's soul both his lively faith and his earnest desire to know the truth. Suddenly the Apostle paused in the midst of his discourse, and with a loud voice said to the man, "Arise, and stand upright on thy feet."

The infirm man soon experienced the efficacy of the command of an Apostle of Jesus Christ, speaking in his Master's name. He did more than he had been told: he began to leap and walk before the multitude. This miracle produced a wonderful effect. All present exclaimed, "These are gods disguised under human form." In a moment this foolish idea took possession of every mind. nothing was left but to give each his name, and this occasioned no difficulty. Barnabas was older than Paul and of finer appearance: they made him Jupiter. Paul, who preached with great eloquence, was taken for the interpreter of the master of the gods: they made him Mercury. The priest of Jupiter ran and brought crowns for the new gods, and oxen to be sacrificed in their honour. Paul and Barnabas, seeing what was about to happen, rent their garments, and, leaping into the midst of the crowd, cried out with all their might, "What are you doing? We are mortals, men like yourselves, who come to conjure you to renounce your vain idols, that you may be converted to the living God, who created heaven and earth."

These words, and the horror with which they regarded the sacrilegious worship intended for them, were scarcely sufficient to keep the people from sacrificing the victims. All this was a snare that the devil was laying for them. They escaped from it, rendering glory to God by their humility in the midst of honours, as they had done by their patience in the midst of persecutions. It was not long before they learned how vain is popular applause.

While they were still contending with the idolatrous inhabitants of Lystra, some emissaries from the synagogues of Antioch and Iconium arrived. By their declamatory addresses, these Jews so changed the minds of the people that they went so far as to stone Paul. Thinking him dead, they dragged him out of the city. It was thus that God punished him for the stones which he had cast against St. Stephen by the hands of others, and that he expiated the fault which he had committed by concurring in the torture of the first of the martyrs.

The Jews were satisfied; but Paul was not dead. The same day he returned to the city. However, not to irritate his persecutors further, he left it the next day, and went with Barnabas to Derbe. Numerous victories crowned their courage. They passed again through Lystra and Iconium, ordaining Priests in every church with prayer and fasting, and, while encouraging the Faithful to persevere in the Faith, reminding them that it is by many tribulations we are to enter into the kingdom of God.

In the year of Our Lord 47, the two Apostles returned to Antioch. Paul did not remain here a long time. He carried the Gospel into Cappadocia, Pontus, Thrace, Macedonia, and even Illyria. Like a divine cloud driven along by the wind of charity, this wonderful man travelled over all the earth to pour out the vivifying dew of the divine word. Five years afterwards he was at Philippi, a city of Macedonia, where he converted among others a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple. She received Baptism with all her family, and obliged St. Paul and his companions to lodge with her, as a sign that they judged her to be faithful to the Lord.

Here Paul endeavoured to gain to Jesus Christ all who came to listen to him. One day as the evangelical labourers were going to prayer, they were met by a girl possessed by a devil, who instructed her regarding secret things as far as a devil could do so. She had placed herself at the service of a gang of impostors; and her evil talent of divination, which has made dupes in all ages, was a source of ample income for them.

As we were passing along, says the sacred historian, we were perceived by this girl, who immediately followed us, crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God; they show you the way of salvation." Paul let her speak. At length, wearied with this artful praise, he commanded the devil to go out of the girl's body, and he was obeyed. But the cruel avarice that possessed the masters of this poor creature cast them into despair at her cure. They endeavoured to give it the colour of a state offence, not daring to acknowledge their passion. They arrested Paul and Silas, and, dragging them to the market-place, presented them to the magistrates. "We bring you two men who are disturbing the city," they said. Without further investigation, the magistrates ordered them to be beaten with rods and cast into prison. The gaoler led them to a dungeon and secured their feet in stocks, which obliged them to lie on their backs and prevented them from standing up straight.

So many ignominies, far from disheartening them, only filled them with a divine joy: at midnight they began to praise God with

such fervour that the other prisoners heard them. God, on His side, was pleased to show the efficacy of their prayers. The foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, the fetters of all the prisoners were broken. The gaoler, awaking, and seeing the doors open, thought that his prisoners had escaped. As he should answer for them with his life, he drew out his sword to kill himself. Paul saw him, though no light had yet been brought, and cried out, "Do yourself no harm—we are all here."

The gaoler procured a light, and, entering the dungeon of Paul and Silas, fell trembling at their feet. He led the Saints into his own apartments, washed their wounds, and gave them to eat. "Masters," he said to them, "what must I do that I may be saved?" They answered him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus." He believed and was baptised with all his family.

When day was come, the magistrates sent lictors to the prison with an order to release the two prisoners. The gaoler hastened to inform them of the good news. Then St. Paul, who had not uttered a word of complaint when beaten with rods and cast into prison, said that it was very strange if Roman citizens could be treated as they had been, and afterwards let out of prison secretly without any reparation being made to them.[1] "No," said he, "this matter cannot pass so easily. Let them come themselves and set us free." He was very glad to frighten the magistrates a little, so that the Faithful of this city might have more quiet and liberty. These rulers, greatly alarmed, came to the prison, and besought the two Saints to leave it and to depart from the city. Paul cherished ever afterwards a tender recollection of the Christians of Philippi; and they, on their side, always looked up to him as a father. It was these beloved children that at a later date brought to the Great Apostle in Corinth the things of which he stood in need. They observed the same conduct a long time afterwards, when he was a prisoner in Rome.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the admirable zeal with which Thou didst fill St. Peter and St. Paul; grant me the docility of the Early Christians.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will attend to these instructions with a great desire to profit by them.*

[1] Roman citizens enjoyed great privileges. The laws specially forbade their being beaten with rods. (Chrys., *in Act. Homil.* xlviii.)

LESSON III.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

Missions of St. Paul to Thessalonica, to Athens, to Corinth, to Ephesus, to Jerusalem. He is taken prisoner and sent to Cæsarea. He sets out for Rome. His Reception. Though a prisoner, he preaches the Gospel. He visits the East, and returns to Rome, which he enters with St. Peter. Death of Simon the Magician. Martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul.

PAUL and his companions, having left Philippi, went to Thessalonica, a celebrated city, and the capital of the province. Paul was specially destined to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. It was by this title above all that the children of Jacob, who regarded him as the natural enemy of their privileges and their law, everywhere declared themselves to be his relations. Yet he did not cease to seek them in all places where he established his missions: he preached on three Saturdays in the synagogue of Thessalonica. His words were not spoken in vain. They converted a few Jews and a great many Gentiles. These new Christians became, by their constancy, their piety, and their tender charity, the model of all succeeding churches.

The Apostle behaved towards them as a fond mother towards her children. In the exuberance of his love he would have desired to give them not only the knowledge of the Gospel, but even his own life. He exhorted and consoled them, and besought them to act always in a manner worthy of God and of the glory to which they had been called. He taught them to sanctify their least actions, and particularly the labours of their hands, in which he set them an example.

Meanwhile, the hardened Jews resolved to rid themselves of the new preachers. Warned in time of the storm that threatened them, Paul and Silas departed for Berea. Here the Gospel soon bore fruit. But certain emissaries having come from Thessalonica to stir up the people, the Christians were obliged to take Paul down to the sea-shore and to put him on board a vessel. Thus did God permit the breath of persecution to drive from city to city this beneficent cloud, in order that it might pour out far away the salutary rain with which it was charged. So true it is that, in the hands of Providence, the passions of men tend to the accomplishment of Its adorable designs.

Some Christians of Berea accompanied the Apostle to Athens, where Silas and Timothy were to meet him. Athens had been the rendezvous of the greatest geniuses, the most famous philosophers

It was still the most polished of cities, the one most occupied with literature. All the fruit that it had derived therefrom was that, Rome excepted, there was not in the world a city more crowded with idols, more burdened with superstitions. It adored all the false gods that it knew to be adored by other peoples. Lest it should have omitted any of which it had no knowledge, it erected an altar with this inscription: *To the unknown God.*

The zeal of the Athenians for error animated that of St. Paul for truth: so much so as to make him pine away with grief. He used to speak to the Jews every Saturday in the synagogues, and in the market-place every day to those whom he met: he had no want of auditors. The inhabitants of Athens seemed to have no other occupation than to while away their time in hearing and telling some new things. The city was also full of Stoics and Epicureans, people curious to know every strange doctrine. They came therefore in a crowd to listen to the word-sower: this is the name that they gave the Apostle. In the beginning they were well enough satisfied with ridiculing him; but they soon led him to the Areopagus, that he might render an account of his doctrine. The Areopagus was the Senate of Athens. Nothing is more celebrated in classic history than this assembly, regarded as the oracle of truth and the standard of taste.

We may also say that there never was a more celebrated meeting than that in which Paul appeared before this academy. Christianity and Paganism, which seemed as if they had been a long time looking out for each other, were at length come face to face: they were about to wrestle with all their strength. On the one side stood the representatives of all the philosophical sects of antiquity, their hearts inflated with pride, their heads filled with prejudices, their tongues expert in sophistry. On the other, a stranger, a Jew of low stature, one in whose exterior there was nothing to command respect. What could be more dramatic or exciting than such a contrast? When all the judges had taken their seats, Paul appeared at the tribunal. What is he going to say? To appreciate the sublime simplicity of his discourse, it is necessary to remark that each of his words is like the stroke of a hammer, which demolishes some one or even several of the absurd systems regarding God, man, and the world, of which his judges are the partisans or the apostles. That he may not strike them on the forehead, Paul does not encounter paganism or philosophy directly: he sets forth the truth. It is for his auditors to draw the conclusion. Here is his admirable discourse:—

"Citizens of Athens! Whatever meets my eyes tells me that you are religious even beyond measure. For, passing through your

city, and observing the images of your gods, I have even seen an altar on which I read the inscription, *To the unknown God.* Now that which you adore without knowing it, I am come to preach to you, namely, the God who made the world and all things therein. The Master of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples raised by the hands of men. If He receives the homage of mortals, it is not because He has need of anything, since it is He who gives life and breath and everything else good to all.

"It was He who brought forth from one man the whole human race, to dwell upon the earth, marking for every man the term of his life, and for every people the limits of its possessions. His design was that men should seek Him in His works, and that, having found Him, they should render to him their homage; for He is not far away from any one of us. It is in Him that we live, and move, and have our being. Hence it was that some of your poets said, *We are the offspring of God.*

"Now, being the children of God, let us beware of supposing that the Divinity is like idols of gold, silver, or stone, works of art and the devices of men.

"And God indeed, looking with pity on those past times of ignorance and blindness, now declares to men in every part of the earth that they must do penance for their wilful wanderings from the right path; because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world with the utmost equity, by the ministry of a Man to whom He has given the power to do so: of which He has assured us beyond all doubt by raising this Man from the dead."

It is impossible to imagine anything better suited to the dispositions or the capacities of his auditors than this discourse of the Great Apostle. An altar erected to the unknown God, in the city of Athens, attracts his attention. He takes occasion from it to awaken in the minds of the idolatrous and superstitious Athenians those ideas of a Creator, a Master, and a Judge which the works of God so naturally suggest to all men. He makes them feel how far they have departed from the first of truths. He adds that God wishes to put an end to this culpable ignorance: that it is necessary to be converted, because the world will be judged; that the Judge exists, and that, to render testimony to the supreme authority given Him, God has raised Him up from the dead.

Thus the unity, the spirituality, the sovereign perfection of God; the creation of man to the image of God, his fall, his obligation to do penance because he must render an account of his works; the creation of the world intended to reveal to man the existence of God: these are the chief articles of the simple and sublime symbol set forth by the Apostle. And so all the systems of philosophers

regarding a plurality of gods, the eternity of the world, creative atoms, the nature and the destiny of the soul, are reduced to dust. What was the fruit of this discourse—the most beautiful, doubtless, that ever fell from the lips of a mere mortal? The same that the word of God still daily produces. No one durst answer it. Some mocked—behold the impious! Others put off concerning themselves with it till another time—behold the indifferent! A few believed—behold the Faithful! Among the last-mentioned was one of the members of the Areopagus, named Denis, who became the first Bishop of Athens and of Paris.

On leaving the Areopagus, Paul learned that Timothy had arrived. Accompanied by his dear disciple, he quitted the city in which he had perceived that the harvest was not yet ripe, and shortly afterwards reached Corinth, the capital of all Greece.

Situated between two seas, which made it the commercial centre of the East and West, this city was exceedingly rich and populous. All vices, but especially impurity, reigned here to a frightful degree. St. Paul went to lodge with a man named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. He chose their house because they were Jews and tent-makers like himself: he used to work with them. No more at Corinth than elsewhere did the Great Apostle wish to receive his subsistence from those to whom he gave the treasure of truth. The self-denial, the prayers, and the zeal of the new missionary had their effect. In spite of all obstacles, Paul planted the Faith at Corinth. It was here that Timothy, who had gone to Thessalonica, rejoined him with Silas. They were his consolation, as well by their presence as by the good news that they brought him of his dear Thessalonicans. To these fervent neophytes he wrote his first epistle, that he might congratulate them and encourage them in their attachment to the Faith.

After an abode of eighteen months at Corinth, Paul left it, and, passing through various provinces of Asia, went to Jerusalem. He soon returned to Ephesus. Here he remained for three years to found this church, which St. John should afterwards consolidate by his presence and honour by his death. It is impossible to tell all that the Great Apostle had to endure, in order to clear this uncultivated field. He informs us himself that there was not a day but he ran the risk of his life. On one occasion, among others, he was seized and thrown to beasts in the amphitheatre; but God delivered him.

In the midst of so many labours and dangers, the indefatigable Apostle wrote his letter to the Galatians. These fervent Christians had let themselves be deceived by some false teachers, who wanted to make them submit to the Mosaic observances: their efforts

tended simply to the overthrow of the Gospel. St. Paul wrote to them with an energy proportioned to his zeal, and to the greatness of the evil that he strove to remedy. About the same time he also wrote his two letters to the Corinthians. All the wise counsels that the most enlightened firmness, the most tender charity, and the most sublime prudence could inspire, are to be found in these two monuments of apostolic zeal.

Meanwhile, the good seed began to bud. Ephesus already counted a considerable number of Christians; but contradiction is the seal of the works of God. So many conversions drew new troubles on the Apostle. Diana, the goddess of the chase, had at Ephesus a temple which was regarded as one of the wonders of the world: all idolators held it in veneration. Those who came to Ephesus never failed to visit this temple, and, in order to render homage to the goddess, they were accustomed to buy and carry home with them some little silver temples, in which the statues of the goddess might be placed.

A certain man named Demetrius, by occupation a silversmith, had a very large stock of these articles on hands, and saw clearly that if the doctrine of Paul should gain ground, there would be an end to his business. Hereupon, he called together all the other silversmiths of the place. "You know," he said to them, "that it is from these goods manufactured in honour of Diana that we earn a livelihood. You know, too, you see with your eyes, that this Paul turns aside, not only in Ephesus, but throughout all Asia, an innumerable multitude of people from calling on us, preaching everywhere that gods made by the hands of men are not gods. What will be the consequence? Why, our craft will be set at nought, and the temple of the great Diana, revered throughout all Asia, will become an object of contempt."

This was to catch vulgar souls by the most effectual means—interest and superstition. Demetrius succeeded far beyond his hopes. All the workmen, filled with rage, began to cry out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The people flock together. The city becomes one scene of wild confusion. At length there is a rush to the theatre. For want of Paul, whom God has hidden from the fury of his enemies, the crowd drags along violently two of his companions, Gaius and Aristarchus.

Paul, informed of what was occurring, had courage enough to desire to present himself before the maddened multitude; but his disciples opposed him in this project. Meanwhile, a thousand shouts rose from the crowd; and, as nearly always happens in a popular commotion, a great many even of the most excited did not know what was the matter. The Jews were afraid lest the storm should

burst upon them. In their anxiety they did all in their power to place one of their party, named Alexander, on an elevated stand, from which he might be able to make himself heard and to plead their cause. He tried to speak; but as soon as it was known that he was a Jew his voice was drowned by a thousand shouts louder than before, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The uproar lasted for about two hours, without any possibility of calming it. When the multitude were tired of this conduct, the town-clerk came forward and represented to them that such a tumult might be regarded as a sedition, for which the inhabitants would be responsible to the emperor; and that if Demetrius had a misunderstanding with anyone, he might go to the court and obtain justice from the proconsul. The people were satisfied with these words and dispersed.

On his side, Paul, having assembled the Christians, bade them farewell, and had no other desire than to depart. Before setting out, he addressed his famous Letter to the Romans: it was in the year of Our Lord 58. This Letter, written after several others, is nevertheless placed first, as well on account of the dignity of the city of Rome as of the important instructions and the admirable doctrine which it contains. The Apostle explains particularly in it the mystery of grace which justifies the sinner, and shows that neither Jews nor Gentiles deserved such a mercy.

Though St. Peter had founded the Church of Rome, St. Paul wrote to the Faithful composing it, for he was the Apostle of the Romans as well as of other peoples. He had already filled with the name of Jesus Christ all the countries extending from Judea to Illyria. Through the various provinces of the East, there was not a place to be found in which the Gospel had not been announced. Wherefore, he had resolved to go to Spain as soon as he should have taken to Jerusalem the alms of the Faithful, and, on his way thither, to call at Rome. Admirable zeal! Empires were wanting for the ambition of Alexander, and now the earth is too small for our new conqueror!

All things being ready, Paul set out from Ephesus, where he had dwelt three years. After passing through Macedonia, collecting the alms of the Faithful for their brethren in Jerusalem, he arrived at Troas, where he celebrated the feast of the Pasch. On this day the disciples assembled in a third-story room to break the sacred bread. Paul preached till midnight, because he should leave the next day. Thus they forgot the hours of refreshment and sleep, all hungering only for truth and the salvation of their souls. The devil wished to disturb this holy joy; but he only increased it. A young man named Eutychus, who had been sitting at a window,

could not resist drowsiness. While asleep during the sermon, he fell from the third story and was killed. This accident points out very clearly the punishment deserved by those who listen negligently to the word of God; but God turned it to the glory of His Apostle and the consolation of the Faithful.

Paul came down immediately, cast himself on the dead man, and, embracing him, restored him to life. "Be not grieved," he said, returning with him to the assembly, "the young man is alive." He continued his discourse, and blessed the sacred bread. We may judge of the renewed fervour with which the disciples heard the Apostle and partook of the holy mysteries. The Divine Eucharist, presented by the hands of a Saint who had just raised a dead man to life, could not fail to touch minds deeply convinced and hearts well disposed. After the heavenly banquet, Paul continued to exhort and to console the Faithful. At break of day he departed for the port, and, having embarked, reached Miletus the third day afterwards. This was a celebrated city on the coast of Asia, in the province of Caria.

It was his intention to be in Jerusalem at Pentecost, that he might more easily gain the Jews by the respect which he would thus show for their feasts and their ceremonies. Notwithstanding his little leisure, he could not prevent his zeal from convoking a kind of synod at Miletus. Sending to Ephesus, he called the Ancients of the Church, that is, the Pastors whom the Holy Ghost had there established to rule the people of God. When he saw them all gathered round him, he uttered one of those apostolic farewells in which a father, all tenderness, letting the sentiments of his heart escape unrestrained, says to his children such touching things as can never be forgotten.

"You know," he said, "what has been my behaviour among you, since the first day that I came to Asia. I have served the Lord in humility, in tears, in the contradictions raised against me by the Jews. Yet I have neglected nothing, omitted nothing, that I thought would contribute to your salvation. I have preached the Gospel to you in public and in private.

"And now, drawn as it were in chains by the Holy Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, ignorant of the fate that is reserved for me What I know is that the Holy Spirit tells me to announce, in all the cities through which I pass, that bands and tribulations await me at Jerusalem. But I am not afraid of these things: I do not prefer my life to the eternal salvation of my soul. It matters little what will happen, provided I finish my course and accomplish the mission which I received from the Lord Jesus, to preach the Gospel of the grace of God.

"What I also know is that you, whom I have visited in my travels, preaching the kingdom of God, shall see me no more. Watch therefore over yourselves, and over the flock of which the Holy Ghost has appointed you bishops and leaders—the dear flock which Our Lord purchased with His blood. Watch therefore, I say to you again, keeping in mind that for three years I ceased not, day or night, to admonish every one of you with tears. And now I commend you to God, and to His grace, which is powerful enough to raise and to uphold the building of the Church, whose foundations I have laid among you."

To all the other traits that characterise the perfect pastor, the Apostle adds that of disinterestedness—a noble virtue, which shone in his life with rare lustre. "I have never desired any man's gold, or silver, or apparel," he says, "as you yourselves know. These hands have provided for my wants and those of my fellow-labourers."

After this affecting discourse, Paul casts himself on his knees: all present imitate his example and pray together. The silence of prayer was soon interrupted by the sighs and sobs of the assembly. All the children of this good father fell on his neck, weeping much, especially because he had said to them that they should never see him again in this world: and thus they brought him on his way to the ship.

Paul disembarked at Tyre, and a few days afterwards he was at Jerusalem. The day after his arrival in this city, he went to see St. James, its Bishop. All the Priests assembled to salute him, and to bless God for the wonders wrought by his ministry among the Gentiles. Seven days rolled by, during which the Apostle was occupied solely with the distribution of the alms that he had brought to the Faithful. As he was one day praying in the temple, he was recognised by some Jews from Asia. They began on the spot to cry out that it was he who everywhere dogmatised against the Law. This cry roused the whole city. The people fell on the Apostle, and dragged him out of the temple, that they might beat him to death with more freedom and less scruple. These furies would soon have killed him, if they had been let alone; but the tribune, Claudius Lysias, who commanded the Roman cohort that kept garrison in Jerusalem, ran hastily with his soldiers: his presence stayed the mob. Taking the Apostle out of their hands, he loaded him with chains, and would have scourged him, the better to appease the people; but Paul put a stop to his designs by inquiring boldly, "Is it thus that you dare to treat a Roman citizen?"

These words made Lysias tremble. He hastened to secure the

Apostle from the violence of his enemies, and to send him to Felix, the governor of Palestine, who resided at Cæsarea. Like most other Roman governors of those days, Felix was a venal soul, anxious only for wealth. He was soon fully aware of the innocence of his prisoner; yet he kept him in prison for two years, hoping that some one would deliver him by the payment of a considerable sum of money. This unjust detention would have been prolonged if Paul had continued longer in his power; but Felix was recalled, and Nero appointed Portius Festus as his successor, in order to win over the Jews. Felix left Paul, chained in the prison of Cæsarea, to the discretion of Festus.

The nomination of a new Roman president in Judea was the last arrangement of Providence to bring about the departure of the Apostle for his mission in Italy. Festus, on his arrival from Rome, called the Apostle before him. After hearing his accusers, the president asked him where he wished to be judged. Paul answered, "I appeal to Cæsar." Festus, astonished at this answer, conferred a moment with his council, and returning to his tribunal said, "You have appealed to Cæsar; to Cæsar you shall go." Thus do men, without knowing or desiring it, second the designs of Providence. Paul went to preach the Gospel in Rome, and the predictions of the Saviour were accomplished to the letter.

The governor learned that a ship, which had called at Cæsarea, was about to lift its anchor. Paul was put on board with other prisoners, under the care of an officer named Julius, a centurion of a cohort of the Augustan legion. He had St. Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica with him. The history of this voyage is so interesting in itself, and so well calculated to acquaint us with the zeal and noble character of St. Paul, that we shall enter into some details regarding it.

After launching out, says St. Luke, we began to coast along by the shores of Asia. The next day we arrived at Sidon, and Julius, treating Paul courteously, permitted him to visit his friends and to provide for his wants. Having set sail again, we steered our course under Cyprus, for the winds were contrary. Passing over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphilia, we reached Lystra, where the centurion, finding a ship of Alexandria about to sail for Italy, removed us into it. We made very little way for many days, and it was only with extreme difficulty that we came abreast of Gnidus; and, because the wind was keeping us back so much, we sailed near the island of Crete on the Salmone side. And, coasting along, we touched at a place named Good Haven, not far from which was the city of Thalassa. A good deal of time having been thus spent, and our advance still becoming more dangerous, Paul warned the crew to

look well ahead of them. "My friends," he said, "I see that you are running a very great risk, not only as regards the ship and the cargo, but also our lives." But the centurion had more trust in the words of the pilot and the master of the ship than in those of Paul; and, as the harbour was not a commodious one to winter in, the majority of the authorities were of opinion that they ought to put out to sea and strive to gain Phenice, a Cretan port, there to pass the winter.

The south wind beginning to blow gently, they thought that they might execute their design with safety. Accordingly, they heaved anchor and for some time coasted along by the island of Crete. But there soon arose a tremendous north-east gale, which drove us under a little island called Cauda, where we were scarcely able to master the boat.

The next day, as we had been dreadfully beaten about by the storm, the sailors cast a goodly portion of the cargo into the sea. The third day afterwards, they also cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. Yet neither sun nor stars appeared for many days; and the storm continued so violent that all hope of our being saved was lost. In the midst of the general alarm, Paul arose and said, "Doubtless, my friends, you would have done better, you would have saved yourselves all this trouble and loss, if you had taken my advice, not to leave Crete. However, I exhort you to have courage, for not one on board shall perish: only the vessel shall be lost. I tell you so because this very night an angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, appeared to me and said, 'Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar, and I am further to inform thee that God hath given thee the lives of all them that sail with thee.' Wherefore, my friends, be of good cheer; for I have this confidence in God, that what has been communicated to me will turn out true. But we must be cast on an island."

The fourteenth night, as the winds drove us along on the Adriatic Sea, the sailors thought about midnight that they could see land, and, having cast out the line, they sounded twenty fathoms of water, and, a little while after, fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing lest we should dash against a rock, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and waited anxiously for daybreak. Now, as the sailors were purposing to flee from the ship, having lowered the boat into the sea under pretence of dropping anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "If these people do not stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat and let it fall off. When morning was come, Paul besought them all to take food, saying, "This is now the fourteenth day that you have been fasting, scarcely taking anything, in expectation of the end of the storm. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat

that you may be able to save yourselves, for not one of you shall lose a hair of his head."

After these words he took bread, and, having returned thanks to God in presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. The rest took courage and began also to eat. Now, we were two hundred and seventy-six souls on board. When the seamen were refreshed, they lightened the ship by casting the wheat into the sea. It being now day, they could not make out what land was in view ; but they saw a creek, on the shore of which they resolved to run the vessel aground, if they possibly could. They took up the anchors therefore, and at the same time let go the helm-bands. Then, committing themselves to the sea and hoisting the mainsail to the wind, they made for the shore. But, meeting with a small promontory, they stranded the vessel there. It was then that the soldiers gave counsel that all the prisoners should be killed, lest any of them, swimming from the wreck, should escape. But the centurion, who wished to save Paul, forbade this, and commanded that those who could swim should first cast themselves into the sea and get to land. As for the others, some were carried off safe on planks and some on the spars of the ship. And thus it came to pass that not a single life was lost.

Now, there were in this place lands belonging to a man named Publius, the chief man of the island. He received us very kindly, and for three days entertained us with much hospitality. It happened that his father was sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went to see him, and, having prayed and imposed hands on him, healed him. After this miracle, all the inhabitants of the island that were sick came to Paul and were healed. They also showed us many honours, and supplied us with everything necessary for the continuance of our voyage. At the end of three months, we embarked in an Alexandrian ship, which had spent the winter in the island, and which bore *Castor and Pollux* on its flag. We reached Syracusa, where we tarried three days. Thence, coasting along, we came to Rhegium. After one day, the wind being set from the south, we arrived on the second day at Puteoli, a city near Naples.

Paul found some Christians here ; for Rome, nay Italy itself, was already crowded with them : St. Peter had planted the Faith in these parts long ago. After spending a whole week with the fervent neophytes of Puteoli, Paul set out for the capital of the world. The brethren of Rome came forth sixty miles to meet him, some as far as a city called *The Forum of Appius*, others to a place called *The Three Inns*.[1] Surrounded by these fervent disciples, the

[1] These ever memorable places still exist. On Feb. 15, 1842, we passed

Great Apostle made his entrance into the city of the Cæsars by the Appian Way: it was in the early part of the spring of the year 61 after the birth of Jesus Christ. He entered the city laden with chains, but with the joy and noble confidence of a prince returning to his capital on a triumphal chariot, crowned with the laurels of victory.

All the prisoners were handed over by the centurion Julius to the prefect of the prætorium, who was the captain of the emperor's guards. This position was then held by Afranius Burrhus, whose good qualities are praised by history, and who restrained as long as he could the evil propensities of Nero. Paul, admired by the very pagans, was granted leave to dwell by himself, with a soldier to whom he was made fast day and night by a long chain, according to the custom of the Romans. The Apostle rented a lodging for himself and his guard: here he spent two whole years, labouring with his hands to defray his expenses.

He received all who came to visit him, and preached the Gospel boldly to them. His captivity was a constant mission, which aided very much in the propagation of the Faith, and made himself celebrated even at the court of the emperor, where there were already many Christians.

Meanwhile the Faithful of Philippi, so tenderly attached to their Apostle, having learned that he was a prisoner at Rome, sent to him their Bishop, Epaphroditus, as well to convey him presents as to assist him otherwise in their name. Paul wrote to his dear Philippians a letter, in which are revealed all the greatness of his soul and the ardour of his zeal. He also wrote to Philemon of Colossa, a Phrygian city, in favour of Onesimus, one of this man's servants. "I beg of you," he says among other things, "in the name of my chains, to receive him as you would receive myself." From this same prison came forth also the admirable Epistles to the Colossians and the Hebrews.

After a captivity of two years, St. Paul succeeded in obtaining a hearing, and, having fully cleared himself from all the accusations urged against him by the Jews, was set at liberty. The man of God soon departed again for the East. According to the general opinion, it was during the course of this journey that he wrote to his beloved disciples Titus and Timothy. After casting a last look on the eastern churches, this glorious orb turned once more towards the city of Rome, where it should sink for ever. Having returned

through *Cisterna*, which, tradition assures us, is the *Three Taverns* of the Acts of the Apostles. A few hours afterwards we breakfasted, in the midst of the Pontine Marshes, at the *Appii Forum*, now called *Forappio*. (See the *Trois Rome*, t. II.)

to the capital of the world, he wrote his second letter to Timothy, and also a letter to the Faithful of Ephesus.

Paul entered Rome with St. Peter. These two conquerors, uniting their powers, planted the standard of their Divine Master even in the Palace of Nero;[1] but this infamous prince, who preferred to lose an empire rather than his infamous pleasures, could not endure the introduction of such a holy religion into Rome. His fury knew no bounds when he was informed of the conversion of a courtesan who was his guilty idol. The Great Apostle, the worker of this prodigy, was immediately laden with chains and cast into prison, where he was soon joined by St. Peter.

Before triumphing over Nero himself by a glorious death, the two champions of Jesus Christ should win a splendid victory over the greatest enemy that the Church had in those early times. Simon the magician, sent to Rome by the devil for the purpose of decrying and hindering the progress of the Gospel, had announced that, as a proof of his divinity, he would fly in the air. It was on the day of the public sports, in presence of the whole city, including the emperor himself, that the false prophet was to work his pretended miracle and confirm his doctrine. Peter and Paul, having learned all this, began to pray. The impostor, abandoned by the devils who upheld him, fell to the ground and broke his legs: his blood even marked the tent from which Nero was watching him. He was borne off; but, mad with rage, he flung himself from the top of his house and so ended his life.[2]

The day of the martyrdom of the two Apostles having come, they were brought forth from their prison, and led together out of the city by the Ostian Gate. St. Peter was taken to the Vatican Hill, where he was crucified with his head downwards: he had asked out of humility to be so put to death, lest it might be supposed that he affected the glory of Jesus Christ, if crucified in the same manner as his Divine Master. St. Paul was taken to a place called the Salvian Waters;[3] and, as a Roman citizen, was beheaded. The ever memorable day on which these events occurred was the 29th of June, in the 66th year after Jesus Christ.[4] St. Peter, the Founder and first Bishop of the Church of Rome, had governed it for about twenty-five years.

[1] The two Apostles were not content with evangelising the city of Rome. St. Paul passed into Spain. St. Peter sent into Gaul and Germany the first Bishops of these countries: among the number, St. Denis the Areopagite, the Apostle of Paris. (See *Les Trois Rome.*)

[2] Prud., de Martyr., II, 145. (See also Tillemont, t. I, 180, and Selvaggio, t. I, 21.)

[3] Baron., 68. *Constit. apost.*, lib. VI, c. ix.

[4] See Baron., ad ann. 69, § 1, 5, 19.—See *Les Trois Rome*, t. III, and Foggini, *De Itinere et Episcopatu Romano Divi Petri.*

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having brought us into life in the bosom of Thy Holy Church; grant us the grace to be ever sincerely attached to the Roman Church, the Mother and Mistress of all other Churches.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will do promptly all that the Church commands me.*

LESSON IV.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

Life, Missions, and Martyrdom of St. Andrew, and of St. James the Greater. Judgment of God on Agrippa, the First Royal Persecutor of the Church. Life, Missions, and Martyrdom of St. John the Evangelist; of St. Philip; of St. Bartholomew; of St. Thomas; of St. Matthew; of St. James the Less; of St. Jude; of St. Simon; of St. Matthias; of St. Mark; and of St. Luke.

THE last lesson set before our eyes a short history of SS. Peter and Paul: the present will sketch for us the expeditions and victories of other evangelical conquerors. The first of whom we have to speak is St. Andrew. The brother of St. Peter, he had the glory of leading to the Saviour him who should be the Head of the Universal Church. After the Ascension, he directed his steps towards Scythia, passed through Greece and Pontus, and at length turned northward. The Russians are convinced that St. Andrew bore the Faith to their country, and even to the frontiers of Poland. He closed his life in the city of Patras in Achaia. It was here that he gave his blood for Jesus Christ, by a death like that of his brother and his Divine Master: he was crucified. Tradition teaches us that St. Andrew's cross was made of two pieces of wood, which crossed each other obliquely in the middle and resembled the letter X.

When from afar the holy Apostle saw the instrument of his torture, he cried out in a transport of joy, "Hail, precious Cross, consecrated by the body of my God, and adorned by His members as by so many costly jewels! O saving Cross, receive me into thine arms! How long have I desired and sought thee! May He who employed thee to redeem me vouchsafe to receive me by thee!" The relics of the Saint now repose in Italy—in the cathedral of

Amalfi. May his love for the Cross dwell wherever there are Christians!

Here comes a new conqueror, a new witness of the Faith which we have the happiness to profess. St. James, the son of Zebedee and Salome, was a brother of St. John the Evangelist and a near relative of the Saviour. He is surnamed *the Greater*, to distinguish him from the Apostle of the same name who was Bishop of Jerusalem. The latter is surnamed *the Less*, probably because he was called to the apostleship after St. James the Greater, or because he was of low stature, or perhaps on account of his youth. Salome, the mother of St. James the Greater and St. John, was also named Mary, and was a first cousin to the Blessed Virgin.

St. James belonged to Galilee. He was a fisherman by profession, as were also his father and brother. After the ascension of the Saviour, he hastened, like the other Apostles, to cultivate the immense field that had fallen to him in the general division. We read that he preached the Gospel to the twelve tribes of Israel, scattered over the earth. He carried the light of Faith to Spain.[2] Laden with the spoils of hell, he returned to Jerusalem, and had not long to wait for the day of his final triumph.

Agrippa, the grandson of Herod, had been brought up in Rome during the reign of Tiberius. He had known Caligula, and deserved the confidence of this prince by basely flattering his passions. Scarcely was Caligula come to the throne, when, to show his attachment to Agrippa, he gave him the title of King of the Jews. The new monarch hastened to take possession of his states. Pretending to be very zealous for the Law of Moses, he raised a cruel persecution against the disciples of Jesus, quite sure of thereby gaining the hearts of the Jews. He profited accordingly of the journey that he made from Cæsarea to Jerusalem with the object of celebrating the Pasch in the year 43, to acquaint them with his desire of pleasing them. St. James was the first victim of his policy: having been arrested a few days before the solemnity, he was ordered to be beheaded, which was done.

Eusebius relates, on the authority of Clement of Alexandria, that the accuser of the holy Apostle was so struck by his courage and constancy that he declared himself a Christian, and was condemned at the same time to decapitation. As he was led with St. James to the place of execution, he begged his pardon for having thus delivered him to his murderers. The Apostle, turning, and

[1] See Ughelli, *Ital. Sacr.*, t. VII; and, regarding the travels of the Apostles, Selvaggio, t. I. 17 *et seq.*

[2] Such is the tradition of the Church of Spain — resting on the authority of St. Isidore of Seville, &c.

embracing him, said, "Peace be to you." They were put to death at the same place. St. James the Greater is the first of the Apostles that suffered martyrdom. The Church, losing on earth one of the great pillars on which it seemed particularly to rest, did not remain less firm, that its enemies might know well that it was not established on the strength of men but on the omnipotence of God.

St. James observed perpetual chastity. He used to eat neither fish nor flesh. He wore only one tunic and a linen robe.[1] His body was buried at Jerusalem; but some time afterwards, his disciples carried it away to Spain. He rests to-day in the cathedral of Compostella, which has become one of the most celebrated pilgrimages of the Catholic world.

Agrippa, who put the holy Apostle to death, was the first king that persecuted the Church. With him begins the dreadful history of the justice of God exercised on those who dared to rise up against the Lord and against His Christ. For kings and peoples have been placed in the world to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ: this is an immutable condition of their glory, their happiness, their very existence. If they despise it, they are assuredly stricken with an exemplary punishment. The rigorous precision with which this law has been carried out during eighteen centuries is not the least proof of the divinity of Christianity. It is a splendid answer to the guilty indifference of our days, which seems to regard Jesus Christ as a kind of dethroned monarch, who no longer deserves to be feared, obeyed, or respected, while it throws an admirable light on the care with which the Divine Shepherd watches from on high over His dear flock.

Herod and Pilate, as we have seen, died miserably. Agrippa, covered with the blood of an Apostle of Jesus Christ, had not long to wait before feeling the effects of the divine vengeance. After the feast of the Pasch, he returned to Cæsarea with the intention of giving some public entertainments in honour of the Emperor Claudius. He was followed thither by an immense number of distinguished persons. On the second day of the sports he appeared in the theatre, with magnificent silver-woven apparel, not less remarkable for its artistic elegance than its extreme costliness: it derived a new beauty from the rays of the sun, which, shining at the time, dazzled the eyes of the beholders. These, on their part, showed him a kind of respect that savoured of adoration. Agrippa having delivered a speech, the flatterers—usually a very numerous class around princes—shouted out again and again, "It is not the voice of a man, but of a god." The prince, intoxicated with this

[1] Epiph., *Epist.* xviii. c. xiv

wicked praise, forgot that he was a mortal; but that moment an Angel of the Lord struck him, and he felt such grievous pains in his bowels that he could not endure them. After lingering on for five days, the physicians being unable to afford him the least relief or to prevent the worms from eating him up alive, he expired in sufferings that cannot be imagined, much less described. The justice of God!—a warning to persecutors!

St. John the Evangelist holds the fifth place among the twelve fishers of men who drew the world forth from the depths of idolatry. The youngest of the Apostles, of virginal body and heart, St. John was the beloved disciple of the Saviour. With Peter and James, he was present at the glorious scene on Thabor, and afterwards at the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani. But he alone, of all the Apostles, had the ineffable happiness of resting, during the Last Supper, on the adorable bosom of the Man-God. He alone followed Him to Calvary. He alone was named with Mary from the summit of the cross in the last will of the Saviour. As a reward for so much love and fidelity, Jesus confided to him the care of His Blessed Mother.

After the ascension of the Divine Master, John preached the Gospel in Judea and Samaria. When the moment was come to bear the sacred torch of truth to the Gentiles, the portion that fell to the beloved disciple was the vast country occupied by the Parthians.[1] These famous people were the only ones that then disputed with the Romans the empire of the world. There remains no trace in history of the wonders that St. John wrought for their salvation. We only know that he returned to Asia Minor, and settled at Ephesus, where the Blessed Virgin dwelt with him. The Beloved Apostle was charged with the government of all the Churches of Asia, and enjoyed a wide renown, as well on account of his eminent dignity as of his virtues and miracles.

Having been arrested by command of Domitian, he was led to Rome in the year of Our Lord 95. He appeared before the emperor, who, far from being touched at the sight of such a venerable old man, barbarously commanded him to be thrown into a caldron of boiling oil.[2] Great was the joy of the Saint when he heard his sentence pronounced: he so burned with the desire of meeting again his Divine Master and of returning Him love for love! But God was satisfied with his dispositions—granting him, however, the honour and the merit of martyrdom. He suspended the activity of

[1] Bar., 44; Aug., *Quæst. ev.*, lib. II, c. xxxix; et Estius, *in Joan.*, p. 1250.

[2] Tertull., *de Præscript.*, c. xxxvi. A chapel built on the spot of the martyrdom, near the Latin Gate, still exists.

the fire, as He had preserved the three children in the furnace of Babylon. The Saint only found in the boiling oil a refreshing bath, and he came forth from it more vigorous than he had entered it.

The tyrant was greatly struck at this occurrence. Not venturing again to put the Saint to death, he banished him to the island of Patmos,[1] there to work in the mines. It was during his abode in Patmos that St. John—a martyr, an apostle, and a prophet of the New Law—wrote his Apocalypse: the word *Apocalypse* means revelation. The Saviour here made known to His virginal Disciple what should happen at the end of time, as well as the wonders of the Heavenly Jerusalem, previously known only to Angels: so much does God love to communicate Himself to pure souls! Condemned to exile, and also to painful labours in mines, at a very advanced age, St. John hoped soon to see an end of his life by martyrdom; but his Divine Master took away this prospect.

Domitian having been assassinated the following year, Nerva, a man naturally peaceful and of many other good qualities, was raised to the throne. St. John received permission to return to Ephesus: he was then about ninety years of age. This did not prevent him from visiting the provinces in the neighbourhood, as well to consecrate Bishops there as to form new Christian territories. Thus did he govern, as before, all the Churches of Asia. One of those whom he consecrated in the closing years of his glorious career was the great Polycarp, whom he established Bishop of Smyrna.[2]

It was about this time that the heart of the Beloved Disciple let all its goodness be seen. The holy old man, having gone to a city near Ephesus,[3] entrusted to the Bishop, before all the people, a young man who, to many bodily graces, joined a quick and warm disposition of mind. "I recommend this young man to you as strongly as I can," he said; "I hand him over to you in presence of Jesus Christ and of the Church." The Bishop promised to take care of him; but he soon forgot his promise. The young man, having too much freedom, was corrupted by some young people of his own age. Borne away by the warmth of his nature, like an unruly horse that gallops off with the bit between its teeth, he soon surpassed his companions in crime. He formed them into a band of robbers, and placed himself at their head: no one more violent, pitiless, or terrible than he!

[1] One of the Sporades or "Scattered Islands" in the Ægean Sea.
[2] Tertull., *de Præscript.* c. xxxii.
[3] Christ., *ad Th.*; Baron., lib. I, c. xcviii; Eus., lib. III, c. xxiii.

Meanwhile, some business brought the Apostle back to the same city. When it was arranged, he called the Bishop and said to him, "Restore to me the deposit that Jesus Christ and I confided to you in presence of the Church over which you preside." The Bishop looked amazed. "I ask you again," said the Apostle, "for your brother's soul, for the young man whom I confided to you." The Bishop, casting down his eyes, replied with tears, "He is dead!" "How so?" inquired the holy old man; "by what kind of death?" "He is dead to God," answered the Bishop; "he became a wicked and perverse youth, and, to tell all in one word, a robber. Instead of being here in the Church, he has taken possession of a mountain, on which he dwells with a troop of people like himself."

On hearing these words, the Apostle, rending his garments and heaving a deep sigh, said to him, "Truly you are a faithful guardian of your brother's soul!" He at once asks for a horse and a guide. Listening only to his charity, the venerable old man mounts the horse and rides off to the mountain mentioned. He is soon arrested by the outlying spies; but, instead of trying to escape from them or begging them to spare his life, he cries out with a loud voice, "It is to be taken that I am come; lead me to your captain." He is led along towards this young man, who stands armed to receive him. Suddenly the robber chieftain recognises John. Seized with fear, he betakes himself to flight. The Saint, unmindful of his weakness and old age, runs after him with all his might, crying out, "My son, my son, why do you run away from me? Why do you run away from your father? What have you to fear from an old, unarmed man? My son, have pity on me! Fear not: there is still hope for your salvation. I will answer for you to Jesus Christ; I will gladly suffer death for you; I will give my soul for yours. Stop, I say: it is Jesus Christ who sends me to you."

The young man could not resist these tender words. He stopped, threw away his weapons, and, casting down his eyes, burst into tears. As he saw the holy old man drawing near, he went forward to embrace him and to bedew him with tears; but he took care to hide his right hand, because it had been sullied with a multitude of crimes. The holy Apostle, pressing him to his breast, assured him anew and with an oath that he would obtain pardon for him from the Saviour. He even went on his knees before him, and, with a kindness that cannot be sufficiently admired, took the hidden hand and kissed it, as being already purified by the tears of penance.

Rejoicing in his success, the good shepherd brought back this stray sheep to the fold, and presented it in the assembly of the Faithful. He did not rest here: he offered continual prayers to

God for the young man. He mortified himself with him, softened his heart, as by a holy enchantment, with various words from the Scripture, and did not leave him until he had re-established him in the Church by a participation in the Sacraments.

It was also in the city of Ephesus that St. John, after his return from Patmos, wrote his Gospel. We are indebted for it to the entreaties of his disciples, of nearly all the Churches of Asia, and of all the Faithful of the neighbouring provinces, who besought him to render in writing an authentic testimony to the truth. He began it only after a fast and public prayers. It was setting out with a profound revelation that he uttered its first words,[1] *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*, &c. The other Evangelists made known the humanity of the Saviour; St. John acquaints us with His divinity. This is the chief object that he has in view.

The Beloved Apostle also wrote three letters, of which we are still in possession. They are worthy of the favourite disciple of Him who is all love. In order to consolidate the evangelical work, God allowed St. John to live to an extreme old age. Unable, from the weight of his years, to walk any longer to the church, he used to be carried thither by his disciples. Finding it beyond his power to deliver a long sermon, he would only say these few words to the people: "My dear children, love one another." When some persons expressed themselves weary of always hearing the same thing repeated, he made this answer, truly worthy of the Apostle of love: "It is the commandment of the Lord. If this is done, it is enough."[2]

His old age was not fretful: he approved of innocent recreations, and set an example in the matter himself. One day as he was amusing himself in fondling a tame partridge, he was met by a huntsman who seemed amazed on beholding so great a man employ himself in such a way. "What is that in your hand?" said St. John to him. "A bow," answered the huntsman. "Why do you not keep it always bent?" "Because it would lose its strength." "Well," replied the holy Apostle, "it is for the same reason that I allow my mind some relaxation." To conclude, having reached his hundredth year, he gave up his beautiful soul into the hands of Him on whose bosom he had had the happiness of reposing. He was buried at Ephesus.

The sixth evangelical conqueror is St. Philip. This new Apostle was from Bethsaida in Galilee: he was one of the first disciples of the Saviour. When, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, the twelve fishers of men divided the world amongst them, St. Philip

[1] See Tillemont, t. I. [2] Hieron., in Epist. ad Gal., lib. III. c. vi.

took his departure for the two Phrygias. This glorious vanquisher of paganism long enjoyed there the fruits of his triumph, since St. Polycarp, who was not converted till the year of Our Lord 80, had the happiness of conversing with him for some time. He was buried in the city of Hierapolis, Phrygia, and more than once has this city felt itself indebted for its preservation to miracles wrought by the virtue of its holy Apostle.

The seventh is St. Bartholomew. Of Galilean descent, he was numbered among the Apostles by the Saviour Himself. As soon as, leaving the Upper Chamber, his companions set out, some for the West, some for the South, some for the North, he turned his eyes towards the most barbarous countries of the East, and pushed forward even to the ends of the Indies.[1] Under this title the ancients sometimes understood, not only Arabia and Persia, but also India properly so called. In effect, they speak of the Brahmans of this country—famous throughout the world for their pretended knowledge of philosophy and for their superstitious mysteries. In the beginning of the third century, St. Pantænus, having visited the Indies to refute the Brahmans, found traces of Christianity there. A copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew was shown him, which he was assured had been brought into those parts by St. Bartholomew, when planting the Faith there.[2]

The holy Apostle returned to the countries situated on the north-west of Asia, and met St. Philip at Hierapolis in Phrygia. Thence he went into Lycaonia, where, as St. Chrysostom assures us, he instructed the people in the Christian Religion. Lastly, he penetrated into Great Armenia, there to preach the Faith to a nation obstinately attached to the superstitions of idolatry: he there received the crown of martyrdom.[3] Greek and Latin historians agree in saying that he was crucified, and flayed alive. The union of these two punishments was customary, not only in Egypt, but also among the Persians: from the latter, their neighbours, the Armenians may have borrowed such a barbarous practice. It is believed that the city of Albanopolis, where he was martyred, is the city of Albania, situated on the shores of the Caspian Sea, which is close to Armenia.

Who can think without astonishment on the many prisons which the Apostles sanctified by their presence, on the vast regions which they traversed and which they watered with their blood? But while we admire their ardent zeal and heroic courage, can we fail to be humbled at the sight of our own sloth—we who do little or

[1] Euseb., l. V, c. x.
[2] *Ib.*, l. V, p. 175.
[3] Greg. of Tours, b. I, c. xxxiv

nothing to extend the kingdom of God among the nations, or even to sanctify our own souls?

The eighth evangelical conqueror is St. Thomas. Like the others of whom we have spoken, he was a Jew by birth. It was to him that the Risen Saviour gave permission to touch the holes of His wounds. After the Ascension, he departed for the East, and carried the Gospel into Persia and Ethiopia, and lastly into India,[1] where he sealed with his blood the doctrine that he had preached. We do not know the exact year of his martyrdom, which took place in the city of Calamina. We know, at all events, that his body was afterwards carried to Edessa, a celebrated city of Mesopotamia, where it was for a long time an object of singular veneration. Such piety is not surprising, when we reflect that it is to the labours and sufferings of the Apostles that we are indebted for the happiness of knowing the Gospel and being Christians.

While St. Thomas was devoting himself to so many trials in the Indies, the ninth evangelical conqueror was forcing his way into Ethiopia and Persia.[3] This new Apostle is St. Matthew. Called from the custom-house to the apostleship by the Saviour in person, he gives himself no other title than that of his first profession: he always calls himself *Matthew the Publican*. His humility employs this language that all generations may admire the power and mercy of Him who is able, when He pleases, to make even from a stone a child of Abraham. Before setting out for his distant missions, St. Matthew wrote his Gospel.[4] Obliged to part for ever with his dear neophytes in Jerusalem, he wished to supply by his book for the want of his presence.

He gives this work the name of *Gospel*, that is to say, *Good News*. And rightly so; for, in tracing the life of the Word Made Flesh, he announces to all men, even the most wicked, the reconciliation of Heaven with earth, the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from hell, the adoption of children of God, the inheritance of an eternal kingdom, the glory of becoming the brethren of God's Only Son: much happy news indeed! St. Matthew pauses to describe the temporal generation of the Redeemer, and leaves to St. John the care of finishing what he has begun, by discovering His eternal birth. He was the first to write a Gospel. Could anything be more proper than that he who had been converted after many sins should be the first to announce the infinite mercy of the Saviour, who came to call, not the just, but sinners?

[1] Chrys., t. VI, *Homil.* xxxi; Baron., 44.
[2] Greg. of Tours, *Gloria martyr.*, c. xxxii.
[3] Socr., l. I, c. xix, p. 50; Ruf., l. X, c. ix, p. 164.
[4] Euseb., p. 95

St. Matthew led a very austere life. He used never to taste flesh-meat: he lived only on herbs, roots, and wild fruits.[1] He died at Lucha, in the land of Sennaar, which formed part of the ancient Nubia, and lies between Abyssinia and Egypt. It was thus that, by an arrangement of Providence, every Apostle should rest, even after his death, in the country assigned to him for the planting of the Gospel, until the day when Rome, to save their precious relics from profanation, would bring them to her bosom. Mighty guardians of our Faith, watch over your work from the heights of your glorious dwelling-place!

The tenth is St. James the Less. He was the son of Alpheus and Mary, a near relation of the Blessed Virgin. St. Jerome and St. Epiphanius inform us that the Saviour, at the moment of His ascension, recommended to him the Church of Jerusalem, and that, in consequence, the Apostles established him Bishop of this city, when they were separating to preach the Gospel. The holy Bishop of Jerusalem made the Jews respect him, in spite of the fury with which they persecuted Christians. It was about the year 59 that he wrote the letter which bears his name. It is entitled *Catholic* or *Universal*, because it was not addressed to any particular church, but to all the converted Jews in general, scattered over various parts of the earth. The Apostle therein refutes the errors of some false doctors, who taught that Faith alone would suffice for salvation, and accordingly that good works would be useless. He also lays down some excellent rules for leading a holy life, and exhorts the Faithful to receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction in their sicknesses.

At the same period, St. Paul having eluded, by his appeal to the emperor, the evil designs of the Jews, the latter determined to satisfy their rage on the holy Bishop of Jerusalem. The high-priest Ananus, a worthy son of the infamous Annas mentioned in the Gospel, assembled the Sanhedrim, and had St. James with many other Christians brought forward for trial. The Apostle was accused of having violated the Law of Moses, and was condemned to be stoned. Before being delivered to the people, he was taken up to the platform of the temple: there he was asked to deny his Faith, in such a way as to be heard by everyone. He was told that this would be a means of undeceiving those whom he had seduced. The Saint, far from doing what was required of him, began to confess Jesus Christ in the most solemn terms. The Scribes and Pharisees, mad with indignation, cried out, "What

[1] Clem. Alex., *Pædag.*, l. II, c. .

the just man is gone astray too!" They rushed in all haste to the place where he stood, and cast him down headlong.

St. James was not killed by the fall: he had yet strength enough to place himself on his knees. In this posture he raised his eyes to Heaven and implored of God the pardon of his murderers, saying like his Divine Master, For they know not what they do. The populace rained on him a shower of stones, till at length a fuller completed the work by striking him on the head with a club, such as is used in dressing cloth. This happened on the festival of the Pasch, the 10th of April, in the year of Our Lord 61.[1] Such was the opinion entertained by the Jews concerning the death of the venerable Bishop, that they attributed to his unjust death the destruction of Jerusalem.[2]

The eleventh Apostle is St. Jude. He was surnamed Thaddeus, which means *praise*, and Lebbeus, which means *a man of intelligence*. He was a brother of St. James the Less, and a near relation of the Divine Master. Chosen like the rest to deliver the world from the sway of the devil, he quitted Judea after Pentecost, made his way into Africa, and planted the Faith in Lybia.[3] In the year 62 after Jesus Christ, St. Jude returned to Jerusalem, and assisted at the election of St. Simon, his brother, as Bishop of this city. It is recorded that he died at Ararat in Armenia. One thing is certain: to this day the Armenians honour SS. Bartholomew and Jude as their first Apostles.[4] We have an Epistle from St. Jude, addressed to all the Churches, and especially to the converted Jews. Its chief object was to fortify the Faithful against the rising heresies of the Nicolites and Gnostics.

Before his vocation to the apostleship, St. Jude had been married.[5] History speaks of two of his grandsons, whose virtues made them worthy of their illustrious ancestor. These innocent Christians owned in common a couple of acres of land, which they cultivated together. The income from their little inheritance enabled them to pay the taxes that Domitian rigorously exacted of the Jews. This suspicious tyrant was not yet satisfied. He commanded that all the descendants of David should be put to death, in order to deprive the Jews of the least pretext for a rebellion. In due course, the grandsons of Jude were denounced to him as belonging to the royal race of David and related to the Christ. They were accordingly brought before Domitian. The emperor questioned them concerning their descent and their property, as well as

[1] Eus., p. 64.
[2] Josephus, Antiq. b. XX, c. viii.
[3] S. Paulin., *Carm.* xxvi.
[4] See Joachim Schroder, *Thes. Ling. Armen.*, p. 149.
[5] Euseb., Hist., l. III, c. xx.

the Messias and His royalty. They answered everything with the utmost sincerity. Their hands, hardened with toil, showed well enough that what they said of their poverty was true. As for the Messias, they declared that He was really a King, but that His kingdom would not appear in all its splendour till the end of the world, when He should come to judge the living and the dead. Charmed with their simplicity, and appeased by the lowliness of their condition, the emperor sent them away as persons from whom there was nothing to fear. They were afterwards raised to the priesthood, and piously ruled considerable Churches.'

God, who glories in displaying the great actions of His servants, is sometimes pleased to keep them concealed: His infinite wisdom would teach us that we ought ourselves to love obscurity and to desire to be forgotten by the world. Such is the reflection inspired by the life of St. Simon. All that is known of this eleventh Apostle is that the ardour of his zeal for the glory of His Divine Master obtained for him the surname of *The Zealous*, and that he evangelised Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Mauritania. The martyrologies of St. Jerome, Bede, Ado, and Usuard, place his martyrdom in Persia, in a city called Suanir, and they attribute his death to the fury of idolatrous priests.

The name of St. Matthias, of whom we are now about to speak, cannot be pronounced without awaking some sad memories. Judas Iscariot had left, by his treachery and death, a place in the Apostolic College vacant. A few days before Pentecost, St Matthias was elected as his substitute. We are not acquainted with the particulars either of his evangelical conquests in Judea and Ethiopia or of his death. His life, like that of St. Simon, is hidden in Jesus Christ, and written only by the Angels in the imperishable book of eternity.

Of the illustrious fishermen whose history we have just traced, twelve had been sent expressly to take in the Church's net the children of Abraham. Thus, by a tenderness that never grows weary, God had vouchsafed, notwithstanding the murder of His Son, to be mindful of His ancient promises to the Patriarchs. The Jews should enter first into the kingdom of God; but their obstinacy obliged the Almighty to give the Messias a new people: the Gentiles became the heirs of the promises. For them Paul was called to the apostleship: his zeal corresponded with the greatness of his mission.

To the history of the twelve conquerors, who never receive from modern peoples that tribute of gratitude which is their due, let us

add the history of St. Mark and St. Luke. These two faithful companions of St. Peter and St. Paul deserve by more than one title the homage of Christian nations. First, they shared the labours of their illustrious patrons; again, they left us the history of the Saviour and of the early evangelical conquests.

St. Mark was of Jewish origin. Drawn to the Faith by the Apostles after the Ascension, he became the companion of St. Peter The Head of the Apostolic College having in his first journey to Rome converted a great many persons, it was at the request of these new believers, and especially of the Roman knights, that St. Mark wrote his Gospel.[1] He collected all that he had heard from the Apostle, and formed his work thereof. St. Peter was delighted with the longing that the Christians showed for the word of life. He approved of St. Mark's Gospel, and impressed upon it the seal of his authority, that it might be read in the assemblies of the Faithful. The Apostle, departing again for the East, sent St. Mark into Egypt with the title of Bishop of Alexandria, which was, after Rome, the most celebrated city in the world.

St. Mark preached during the space of twelve years in various parts of Egypt, after which he came to Alexandria, where in a little while he formed a very numerous Church. The astonishing progress of Christianity set the pagans in such a rage that they decided on destroying the instrument of so many wonders; but St. Mark found a means of concealing himself for some time. At last he was discovered, as he was offering *the prayer* to God, that is to say, as he was celebrating the sacred mysteries. The boldest among the pagans laid hold of him, bound him fast with cords, and dragged him along the streets, crying out that the ox must be led to Bucoles, which was a place near the sea, full of rocks and precipices. This happened on the 24th of April, in the sixty-eighth year of Jesus Christ and the fourteenth of the reign of Nero.

The Saint was dragged about during the whole day. The ground and the stones were spotted with his blood, and everywhere might be seen pieces of his torn flesh. All through this frightful torture, the venerable old man never ceased to bless God for having thought him worthy to suffer for the glory of His name. When evening was come, the pagans threw him into prison. Next morning he was dragged out again, as on the day before, and under so many cruelties he expired. The Christians gathered up the remains of his body, and interred them at Bucoles, in the very place where they usually assembled for prayer.

St. Mark, in his Gospel, has only abridged St. Matthew. His

[1] Euseb., l. II, c. xv

style of narration is concise: it has all the charms of an elegant simplicity. After the example of St. Matthew, he makes the Saviour known to us as a Man, a Legislator, and a Model. He does not relate what the Son of God said in praise of St. Peter, but enters into all the particulars of his denial, in order to gratify the holy Apostle's humility.

A very different treatment is given to events by the Evangelist of whom we are now about to speak. St. Luke seems to have aimed at showing us the Saviour as a Priest and a Pastor. In his Gospel alone do we find an account of several circumstances relative to the Incarnation, as the annunciation of this mystery to the Blessed Virgin and her visit to St. Elizabeth, the parable of the Prodigal Son, and several other important points. The style is clear and varied. We are amazed at the sublimity of the thought and the diction. Withal, we cannot but admire that simplicity which is the distinctive characteristic of the sacred penmen. The energy with which the Evangelist speaks of the patience, meekness, and charity of a God made Man for us; his calmness in relating the Passion and Death of the Saviour, avoiding every kind of exclamation, and abstaining from all those severe epithets which are so commonly applied to the enemies of a person beloved: there is something about all this so grand, so noble, so affecting, and so convincing, that we shall in vain look for the like amid the most beautiful ornaments of profane language. Such a simplicity makes, if we may be allowed the expression, great actions speak for themselves, when human eloquence would only diminish their splendour

Having made known the work, let us make known the author. St. Luke was a native of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, where he laid the foundation of many excellent studies, which he afterwards perfected by travelling into Greece and Egypt. His taste inclined him particularly towards medicine; but it seems that it was only after his conversion to Christianity that charity induced him to practise an art which he found to be compatible with the labours of the apostolic ministry. St. Jerome assures us that he excelled in it; and all tradition adds that he was no less expert in painting.

He was already a perfect model of every virtue, when St. Paul chose him to be his companion and fellow-labourer, about the year 51 of Jesus Christ. These two great Saints never afterwards separated, except at intervals and when the necessities of the Church required it. St. Luke followed the Great Apostle to Rome in 62, when the latter was sent thither a prisoner, and did not leave him till he had the happiness of seeing him released in 63.

This same year he completed the Acts of the Apostles, a valuable

history which he had undertaken at Rome by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.[1] It forms, as it were, a continuation of his Gospel. He proposes to himself therein to refute the false accounts that were published regarding the lives and labours of the founders of Christianity, and to leave, in an authentic record of the wonders that God had wrought in favour of His Church, an unanswerable proof of the resurrection of the Saviour and the divinity of the Gospel. After the death of St. Paul, the Evangelist preached in India and Dalmatia. He terminated his long career by a glorious martyrdom.[2]

It is worthy of remark that, so to speak, it was only with regret and as if forced thereto, that God, in the New as well as in the Old Testament, caused His law to be written. Oral tradition is much more conformable to the simplicity and the innocence that God desires to see prevailing amongst men; it is also much better suited for drawing close the family bonds, and making of all the scattered members of the human race but one united people. Hence, we do not see that Our Lord charged His Apostles with the duty of writing the history of His life or His doctrine: the authors who have done this were induced to it by a variety of circumstances and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. St. Matthew wrote his Gospel at the request of the Jews converted in Palestine. St. Mark was moved to the task at the request of the Faithful of Rome. St. John was besought by the Bishops of Asia to leave an authentic testimony of the truth against the heresies of Cerinthus and Ebion.[3]

St. Irenæus, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine find a figure of the Evangelists in the four mysterious animals of Ezechiel and the Apocalypse. Hence, the portrait of each of the Evangelists is usually accompanied with one of these figurative animals. It is generally agreed that the *eagle* denotes St. John, who, at the very outset, rises even to the bosom of the Deity, there to contemplate the eternal generation of the Word. The *ox* is symbolic of St. Luke, who begins by making mention of the priesthood of the God-Man and the sacrifice of Zachary. St. Matthew is represented by an animal that has as it were *the figure of a man*, because he begins by relating the temporal generation of the Saviour, with whose holy humanity he desires to acquaint us. Last of all, the *lion* characterises St. Mark, because he explains the royal dignity of the Saviour, the true Lion of the fold of Juda, and begins with His retreat in the desert, the usual abode of the lion.

[1] Hier., *Catalog. Vir. Illustr.*, c. vii.
[2] See St. Greg. Naz., *Orat.* iii; St. Paulin., *Serm.* xvii.
[3] See Eusebius, l. III, c. xxiv; *id.*, l. II, c. xv; St. Jerome, *Prol. in Matt.*

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having transmitted Thy holy doctrine to us, not only by word of mouth, but also in writing. Vouchsafe to enlighten those who do not yet know Thee!

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will read the Gospel with the most profound respect.*

LESSON V.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY. *continued.*)

Conflict between Paganism and Christianity. Pagan Rome.

The Kingdom of Heaven or the Church is like a grain of mustard-seed, which, though the least of all seeds, becomes in course of time a large tree, so that the birds of the air may build their nests among its branches and find shelter beneath its foliage. This is what the Saviour said to His Apostles when, poor and obscure, He was journeying from village to village in Palestine. As there is no part of the earth that the sun does not visit in his daily course, so there is no people under the sky that has not heard their voice. This is what the Royal Prophet said, a thousand years beforehand, when announcing the conquests of the Galilean fishermen.

The history of their missions is the literal accomplishment of these two prophecies. East, South, West, and North saw the evangelical conquerors. At every corner of the earth, they raised on high the victorious standard of the Cross. In all lands they scattered the seed of truth; and the good seed brought forth a hundredfold. When the last of these twelve wonderful men sank to rest in the city of Ephesus, the light of the Gospel was shining from pole to pole: there were Christians everywhere and in great numbers.

Here then is a new society forming itself in the bosom of the old society. It grows rapidly. The two shall soon stand face to face, and one step shall bring them to blows: the old shall seek to crush the young society. Before describing the bloody conflict that, for three centuries, will redden the fairest fields of the world, it is necessary to be well acquainted with the character of the two opposing camps: on the one side, Paganism; on the other Christianity. From this knowledge will result three principal advantages.

1. Seeing on the one side the old world, the pagan world, worn out with infidelity and debauchery—furious at being disturbed in the enjoyment of its infamous pleasures and brutal despotism—issuing its edicts of general proscription, like so many thunderbolts against its weak rival—arming its soldiers and proconsuls with axes—unchaining as many lions, tigers, and bears as the deserts of Africa and the forests of Germany can supply to it—calling to its aid its victorious legions, its senators, and its emperors; seeing on the other side the young world, the Christian world, formed of the poor and the lowly—strong only in its Faith—opposing naught to its formidable enemy but its angelic virtues, and the short expression, *I am a Christian:* we shall behold with our eyes, we shall touch, so to speak, with our hands, the almighty arm that made the feeble triumph over the powerful, the victim over the slaughterer. Filled with astonishment, we shall adore in silence, and say with Tertullian:—It is incomprehensible. It is incredible. Therefore, it is the work of God. *Incredibile, ergo divinum!*

2. When we have studied in detail the state of the pagan world—when we have witnessed the abjection and misery into which, of old, the child, the wife, the slave, the poor were plunged, and withal what has been done for them by Christianity, we shall know the difference between the two societies. Our hearts will overflow with gratitude, and continual praises will ascend from our lips to the Divine Saviour, who, drawing us from that awful state, in which, without Him, we should have been born and should have died, has called us to the sweet light and liberty of the Gospel.

3. In becoming acquainted with the Early Christians, our illustrious ancestors, we shall supply what was wanting to our early education, to that foolish education which spoke to us only of pagan heroes and fabulous gods, as if we had been little citizens of Athens or Rome, future adorers of Mercury and Jupiter. The virtues of our forefathers will teach us how great is the sanctity of our vocation. We shall say to ourselves, "See what our fathers did and how, like our Divine Model, they cry out to us, 'We have given you an example, that you may do as we have done!' Heirs of their blood and their name, why should we not be able to do what they did? In Religion nothing changes. We adore the same God, profess the same Gospel, expect the same reward. Children of the Old Adam, like us, our ancestors were weak, tempted, poor, oppressed; it only remains for us to become, like them, children of the New Adam, simple, humble, sincere, chaste, resigned, charitable. It must be done; yes, it must be done: Heaven is the prize!"

To know well the difference between Paganism and Christianity, to appreciate fully the benefits for which the world is indebted to

the latter, to gaze close at hand on the virtues of our ancestors in the Faith, let us go back eighteen hundred years. Let us suppose that we arrive in Rome on the day after the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, and let us study carefully this famous city, in which the whole world was then reflected as in an immense mirror.

Paganism and Christianity are preparing for battle.

The first has reached its highest stage of development. The second is yet in its cradle. Let us consider Paganism in regard to its worship, its manners, and its laws, and then oppose to them the worship, the manners, and the laws of Christianity. Paganism occupies that Rome which appears in sight of the sun; Christianity occupies Subterranean Rome. Let us take a view of Pagan Rome.

After seven hundred years of continual war, the Romans had attained to the empire of the world. Like all other pagan peoples, they had fought only for the sake of booty and slaves. The earth had appeared to them like a sheep which it was not enough to shear, but which they should also flay. Let us ascend to the summit of their Capitol, and see what they did with their great spoils.

At our feet lies an immense city: through it move more than five millions of inhabitants. Nothing elsewhere to equal the number and magnificence of its palaces and temples: we are surprised that all the gold in the world should have sufficed to build and adorn them! Rome had stood on seven hills; but, thanks to successive enlargements, it crowned under the Cæsars a dozen of these heights.[1] It was divided into fourteen wards,[2] and had a perimeter of two hundred and four thousand nine hundred and fifteen feet. It contained forty-eight thousand seven hundred and nineteen houses. This number included two thousand palaces of incredible splendour.[3] Arched to a certain height, and built of a stone that resisted fire, they all stood apart from one another, without partition walls: each of them was like a whole city. There might be seen forums or spacious courts, circuses, porticoes, baths, gardens, and rich libraries.

[1] The following are the names of the seven original hills: Palatin, Japitolin. Aventin, Cœlius, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquilin. The others: Janicule, Monte-Cavallo, Pincio, Vaticano, Citorio, Giordano.

[2] Namely—(1) Porta Capena; (2) Cœlimontium; (3) Isis et Serapis Moneta; (4) Templum Pacis; (5) Esquilina cum turre et colle Viminali; (6) Alta Semita; (7) Via Lata; (8) Forum Romanum; (9) Circus Flaminius; (10) Palatium; (11) Circus Maximus; (12) Piscina Publica; (13) Aventius; (14) Trans Tiberim.

[3] In former editions of the Catechism we only mentioned the palaces. (See Onuphre, *Descript. urbis Romæ*, p. 105; Nardini, *Roma antica*, p. 74.)—The above calculation does not include the suburbs, which covered the vast plain in the middle of which Rome was seated.

To satisfy the effeminacy and to nourish the indolence of its voluptuous inhabitants, Rome had nine hundred bath establishments, three hundred and twenty-seven capacious granaries, and forty-five palaces of debauchery. Within its vast circuit rose four hundred and seventy temples, in which worship was rendered to thirty thousand gods. Rome also possessed five naumachies, or lakes for representing naval battles; statues and obelisks without number; thirty-six triumphal arches, formed of exquisite marble and ornamented with rare specimens of sculpture; twenty-four horses of gilt bronze and ninety-four of ivory; several amphitheatres, of which one alone could afford sitting accommodation to eighty-seven thousand spectators; and a Grand Circus, which could admit, according to those who make the lowest computation, a hundred and fifty thousand persons, and according to those who make the highest, four hundred and eighty-three thousand. There was not one hospital there. Far above everything else in magnificence rose the imperial palace, built by Nero, less remarkable for the gold and jewels lavished on its ornamentation than for the gardens, ponds, and woods with which it was surrounded. Twenty-four roads, covered with large flagstones and bordered with superb mausoleums, went out from the twenty-four gates of Rome, leading from the capital of the world to its provinces.[1]

Let us now descend from the Capitol, and penetrate into the interior of the houses. Before coming to a master, we meet with thousands of slaves, who, during the day, are at the beck of his every caprice, and, during the night, are shut up in dark and loathsome prisons called *ergastula*. The multitudes of people who swarm in the streets, sleep on the tiles, or wherever else they can. During the day they visit the amphitheatre or places of debauchery. There are only two wants: food and pleasure.[2] As for the rich man, he occupies apartments whose walls are painted in fresco, the floors adorned with costly mosaics, and the ceilings inlaid with gold. He is surrounded with all that we should expect to find in a palace of the utmost magnificence. History, and the monuments still remaining, tell us that gold, silver, ivory, jewels, and the most precious woods superabounded in the furniture.

Cicero, the modest Cicero, had a table of citron-wood that cost two hundred thousand sesterces, that is to say, about a thousand pounds sterling. A simple house that he purchased from Crassus cost him three and a half million sesterces, that is to say, about eighteen thousand pounds sterling.

[1] This description is taken from Aurelius Victor, and Onuphre, lib. I, p. 105. (See other details in the *Trois Rome*, t. I.)

[2] Duas tantum res anxius optat, panem et circenses.

Julius Cæsar had two tables that cost him ten thousand pounds. This same Cæsar used to appear at the public games in a chair of massive gold.

Let us now reckon up the wealth of some of these Roman citizens.

Crassus owned two thousand millions of sesterces between land and money, without counting his furniture or slaves. Hence, he would modestly remark that a man ought not to be called rich unless it was in his power to maintain a legion: now, we know that a Roman legion numbered about six thousand men.

Seneca, the *Philosopher*, had in landed property three hundred millions of sesterces. Another Roman, named Caius Cæcilius Claudius Isidorus, declared in his will that, though he had lost much during the civil war, yet he left to his heirs four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves, three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, and two hundred and fifty-seven thousand other animals, with six hundred millions of sesterces.

How did they employ their enormous riches, and their power over the whole world? With regard to God, in sacrilege; with regard to themselves, in immorality; with regard to others, in the most barbarous oppression. These degraded beings turned all creatures into so many instruments of crime.

Their religion was infamously gross. Their temples were places of debauchery; their feasts, schools of corruption; their gods, all the passions of their hearts. Of their mysteries and their secret initiations, we will not speak: every modest soul knows the reason. We will only say that the example of the gods served as an encouragement to crime. Notwithstanding the multitude of her own gods, Rome, as if not sufficiently rich in this respect, adopted all those of the nations which she subjected to her authority. Hence, within her walls might be seen divinities of every shape and name, sacrifices and religions of every kind. Satan received there under a thousand and a thousand forms the adoration of mortals. Rome was the centre of his empire, was his temple, was his heaven.

With passions nourished by opulence and countenanced by religion, it may be imagined what, under the burning sky of Italy, were the manners of the Romans. Their foolish expenditure for the gratification of their luxury surpassed all that can be told. Caligula squandered in less than a year two thousand seven hundred millions of sesterces that had been left to him by the Emperor Tiberius. Some private individuals, having returned from their expeditions, outshone in magnificence the greatest monarchs. Such a one was the famous Lucullus. Besides his gardens, so celebrated in history, he had many banquet-halls, to each of which he gave

the name of a particular divinity: and this name was a sign to his steward of the style to prevail there. One day, Pompey and Cicero having visited him unexpectedly, he said that he should have supper in the hall of Apollo, and a repast that cost a thousand pounds was served up to them. Another time, this decent man fell into a fury with his steward, who, knowing that he was to sup alone, had caused a repast less sumptuous than usual to be prepared. "Did you not know," said he, "that Lucullus was to sup to-day with Lucullus?" His excesses upset his mind, and he died a fool.

Titus Annius Milo died indebted to the amount of nearly three and a half million pounds.

Another, having spent six hundred million sesterces in good cheer, was obliged to examine the state of his revenue:[1] he found that it did not show more than about ten thousand pounds. Thinking that such a sum would never suffice to maintain a Roman, he poisoned himself. His kitchen alone had cost him a thousand million sesterces.[2] The name of this man was Apicius. Glorious were his titles: he was the inventor of cakes that bore his name, and president of a society of gormandisers!

All were more or less abandoned to these disgusting excesses. The splendour of their festivities exhausted the resources of the state and the wealth of families. For this people of Sybarites, it was necessary to search out the rarest fishes in the most distant regions. They had discovered a means of serving up whole pigs, roasted on one side and boiled on the other. They piled together the brains of poultry and porklings, the yolks of eggs, and rose-leaves, and made of all a savoury pie, cooked at a gentle fire, with oil, brine, pepper, and wine. Before their repast, they would eat grasshoppers to give themselves an appetite. The most exquisite wines were not admitted, unless made fragrant with aromatics.

Far from discouraging this luxury, which was ruinous to the rich and provoking to the poor, the emperors were foremost in setting an example of it. We have seen the conduct of Caligula: his profuse expenditure was at least equalled by his successors. Verus gave a banquet that cost six million sesterces. Heliogabalus surpassed all his predecessors. He fed the officers of his palace with the entrails of barbels, the brains of pheasants and thrushes, the eggs of partridges, and the heads of parrots. To his dogs, he gave the livers of ducks; to his horses, Apamenian grapes; and to his lions, parrots and pheasants. As his own share, he had the heels of camels, crests torn from living cocks, the tongues of pea-

[1] The sesterce was worth about five farthings. (See *Coutumes des Romains* par Nieuport, liv. VI, p. 282.)

[2] Seneca. *Cons. ad Helviam*, c. x.

fowl and nightingales, pease boiled with grains of gold, beans fricasseed with bits of amber, and rice mixed with pearls. It was also with pearls, instead of white pepper, that he sprinkled truffles and fishes. A forger of meats and drinks, he used to mix mastic with wine from roses.

In summer, the ornaments at his repasts changed their colour daily. On the chafing-dishes, pans, and silver vases a hundred pounds weight, were embossed the most obscene figures. Tables of massive silver were strewn with roses, violets, hyacinths, and daffodils. Turning ceilings scattered so many flowers that the guests were almost suffocated by them. Spikenard and rich perfumes fed the lamps at these banquets, which sometimes numbered twenty-two courses.

To the extravagance of the table, the Romans added that of dress. Heliogabalus again served them as a model. He was clad in silken robes, embroidered with pearls. He never wore twice the same shoes, the same ring, or the same tunic. The cushions on which he rested were stuffed with a down gathered from under the wings of partridges. Beneath porticoes spangled with gold, he rolled on golden chariots incrusted with precious stones; for Heliogabalus scorned to drive in silver or ivory chariots.

If these iniquities and follies belonged only to one man, we could not thence draw any conclusion regarding the manners of a people. But Heliogabalus had merely united in his own person all that had been seen before him from Augustus to Commodus. The example of masters had produced its effect: in all things it had found imitators. Women carried on themselves what would support several provinces. Near the indolent matron might be seen arriving, from the hour of rising, a long procession of slaves, who carried to her the articles of her toilet—a gold or silver basin, a pitcher, a mirror, curling-irons, and paint, with pots of ointment for cleaning the teeth, blackening the eyebrows, and dyeing and perfuming the hair: it might be said, the laboratory of an apothecary! From her ears were suspended precious pearls. Bracelets in the shape of golden serpents entwined her arms. A crown of diamonds and gems from the Indies rested on her head. Her necklaces were long and superb. Golden heels adorned her purple shoes. And she tinged with pink her impudent cheeks, in order to hide her paleness.

When all did not succeed to the liking of these criminal women, they rushed into extreme measures with their slaves. The toilet of some of them was no less terrible than the tribunal of Sicilian tyrants.[1] Besides the legion of attendants engaged in the actual

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.* vi

work of ornamentation, there were others whose sole duty was to give their opinion. They formed a kind of council, and any affair brought before them was treated as seriously as if it were a matter of life and death. Physicians having said that a lotion of ass's milk would remove wrinkles, and, while softening the skin, would preserve its whiteness, there were women who, to keep up the beauty of their faces, used to wash themselves *seventy* times a day (the number scrupulously observed) with this cosmetic. All the world knows that Poppea, so shamefully celebrated in the life of Nero, had usually *five hundred* suckling asses in her suite, and used to bathe in their milk in order to make her skin more tender.[1]

They could no more venture out without diamonds than consul without the marks of his dignity. "I saw," says Pliny, "and it was not at a public ceremony, at one of those feasts in which all the luxury of opulence is displayed; I saw, at the supper of a most ordinary wedding, Lollia Paulina all covered over with emeralds and pearls, which looked still more brilliant by their mixture. Her head, her ears, her neck, her arms, and her fingers were laden with them. They were worth forty million sesterces."[2] They were the family jewels: she had inherited them from her uncle, Marcus Lollius.

After what we have just said, it cannot be difficult to conjecture what were the morals of the pagan world, given over without restraint to these monstrous excesses of luxury and gaiety. They were such that our pen shrinks from tracing a picture of them: so powerless would it be, even though it were dipped in mire. All that we may say is that infamous deeds, the sight of which *would make the moon grow pale*, and the very names of which would sully the lips that uttered them and the ears that heard them—infamous deeds, consecrated by usage, authorised by the silence of the laws, sanctioned by religion, were committed publicly, in the houses and the theatres, in the palaces of emperors and the temples of gods, by the young and the old, by the noble and the vulgar: Sodom itself would have been put to the blush![3]

Such was Pagan Rome. Such were its inhabitants. Their religion and their morals were an outrage on the Divinity, as well as on humanity. What were they towards their fellow-beings? This is what remains for us to examine.

Voluptuous people are always cruel people. Debauchery is

[1] Pliny, xi, 41. [2] *Ibid.*, lib. I, c. xxxv.

[3] Not one of the particulars into which we have just entered regarding Rome, and the luxury and the depravity of its inhabitants, but has been taken from pagan authors. We are far from having said all. We have not even cited the authors: God knows why

the daughter and the mother of selfishness; and selfishness is hatred of others. Pagan Rome justifies this principle; for that cruelty which is the perfection of hatred reigned everywhere. First, in the amphitheatre. Before speaking of the streams of blood with which it was inundated, let us make known the place itself, so celebrated by the glorious victories of our ancestors in the Faith.

The amphitheatre was an elliptical space, surrounded with seats that rose one above another, from which the people could behold the entertainment. The greatest and grandest of all the amphitheatres of the Romans was that which even to the present day is called the *Coliseum*. This name it received from a colossal statue of Nero, which stood in the neighbourhood. It was constructed of Tiburtine stone, whose hardness and beauty approach those of marble. Its width was five hundred and twenty-five feet. The terraced seats with which it was surrounded, rose to a height of a hundred and sixty-five feet, and placed a hundred thousand spectators at their ease. Underneath these seats were the cages and prisons, wherein were confined the beasts intended for the conflict. Not far away were immense reservoirs full of water.

To vary the pleasures of the kingly people, the reservoirs might be opened. They inundated the central part of the amphitheatre; and a kind of sea-fight would begin in the same place where a moment before had been seen a deadly struggle between men and beasts. Near the entrance was an altar, on which these good Romans used to immolate human victims at the beginning of their sports.[1] In a prominent position was the imperial box:[2] when the emperor entered, all present rose, and clapped their hands. The combatants, drawn up in order, would defile before his box, and say, "Cæsar! they who are about to die salute thee!"[3]

At a given signal, the combat began. To see men slaughtering one another for mere amusement was a spectacle so agreeable to this bloodthirsty people, that, by the promise of it, anything could be obtained from them. Such was the extent of this evil that individuals, seeking office, had to be prohibited from promising to the people a spectacle of gladiators.[4]

Persons of all ages and ranks, as well as of both sexes, feasted eagerly on these horrible scenes. When a gladiator was wounded, the people cried out, "He is caught!"[5] The gladiator let his arms

[1] Minut, Felix, *Oct.;* Tertull., Apol., c. ix. [2] Cubiculum principis.
[3] Cæsar, morituri te salutant. [4] *Lex Tullia*, enacted by Cicero.
[5] Hoc habet. (See the detailed description of the Coliseum, and the different kinds of combats, in *Les Trois Rome*, t. I.)

fall, which was a sign that he acknowledged himself beaten. It depended on the people to grant him life. If they wished to save him, they held down their thumbs; if they wished him to die, they held them up, and the poor gladiator submitted to death. The motion of a thumb decided the life of a man! What respect for human nature!

These victims, compelled thus to immolate themselves for the diversion, not only of the most abject, but also of the most refined classes, were sometimes unfortunate prisoners of war; sometimes poor slaves, whose only crime was that they were slaves; sometimes abandoned children, whose lives had been preserved that they might be parted with in these dreadful combats. Fathers, sons and brothers were thus forced to slaughter one another, that they might recreate a Nero, or, still better, a Vespasian or a Titus.

And let it not be supposed that this spectacle was peculiar to the city of Rome, and counted only a small number of combatants. Throughout the whole extent of the empire there were amphitheatres; and by kings, and governors, and magistrates, and private individuals, were gladiators given to the people. It is by millions that we must count the victims of this cruel sport. In the space of a hundred and twenty-three days, Trajan gave ten thousand gladiators. At these same sports, eleven thousand animals appeared in the arena. So many hungry mouths would have been in want of pasturage, if happily the martyrs had not been found to supply with flesh and blood those armies of the desert.

The Roman law threw the mantle of its tender care over these pitiless beasts. It forbade the killing of lions, tigers, or panthers in Africa, and of wolves or bears in the forests of Germany, as we should forbid the killing of a sheep with lambs. The clash of swords—the roar of animals—the groans of victims, whose entrails were dragged along a sand perfumed with essence of saffron and exquisite waters—delighted the multitude. On leaving the amphitheatre, they went to plunge into baths or places of debauchery.

Private festivities were set off by these sanguinary pleasures. When persons had fully sated themselves and were drawing near to drunkenness, the gladiators were called in. The hall rang with applause when one of the combatants was slain.[1]

This cruelty of Pagan Rome, this contempt of humanity, manifested itself in many other ways. In that old society, which knew no other rule than the right of might, the weak were everywhere oppressed.

To begin with the wife, I cannot venture to say what was her

[1] Chateaubriand.

not: it might be supposed that I was calumniating the whole human race. And yet history is there, written in filth, to attest the horrible debasement of the pagan wife. Born the slave of her father, who could kill or sell her, and who often availed himself of his right, the pagan daughter was at last sold to him who offered the highest price for her.. Do not think that in becoming the wife of man she became his noble companion : no, she remained his slave, she formed a portion of his property, she even lost her name.[1] Every day, exposed to the caprice and the brutality of her new master, betrayed, dishonoured, she looked upon herself as too happy if she was not at length abandoned to utter misery and disgrace : this was her ordinary lot. Polygamy (that fatal source of jealousy, hatred, and murder) and divorce (that sacrament of adultery and cause of unspeakable humiliations to the wife) were authorised by the laws.[2] The wretched slave of the head of a family, what regard, what respect, could be hoped for from the children of a mother who might, one day or other, be ignominiously banished from the domestic hearth ?

So much for the wife, the mother, in Paganism. Such is she still to-day among idolatrous people ;[4] and, that she may know well

[1] *Histoire des lois sur le mariage et le divorce*, par M. Nougarède, t. I.

[2] *Histoire des lois sur le mariage et le divorce*, par M. Nougarède, t. I.— This condition of the daughter has remained the same wherever Christianity has not exercised its sweet influence. Among the Arabs of the Delta, the formula of marriage runs thus : the father of the girl says to the future husband, *I will give thee a slave to take care of thy household.* (Michaud. *Correspond. d'Orient.*)

[3] The principle of the arbitrary right of repudiation was to be found in the Code of the Twelve Tables. The abuse of this right was carried to extremes : the causes of divorce were soon a mere mockery. The wife of Sempronius had gone to the public games without his permission ; that of Antistius had spoken in an under tone to a freed-woman of doubtful character ; and that of Sulpitius had been met by him in the street without a veil. Offences so grave sufficed for their repudiation ! Soon there were found causes that had not even the appearance of a crime. "Scarcely," says Juvenal, "has the complexion of Bibula begun to fade, and her teeth to lose their whiteness and her eyes their brightness, when a freed-man comes to her. 'Begone,' he says : you blow your nose so often ! Make haste : we want a less disgusting nose than yours !' "

[4] It is enough to know what takes place in Turkey, in China, in the Indies. I cannot count all the books that describe the abjection of woman in these countries. It is the same among the Negroes of Central Africa. (See *Influence des femmes*, by Madame de Mongellaz ; *Institutions des peuples de l'Inde*, by M. Dubois ; *Voyage à Tombouctou*, by Caillé. See also the accounts of missionaries and travellers.) While we write these lines, an iron yoke still weighs on Chinese girls. Let us quote from the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, n. 50, p. 220, an. 1837 :—

"The Chinese laws do not permit a dowry to be given to girls. Parents

that it is to Christianity alone she owes the advantages that she enjoys among us, such does she gradually become among the nations and in the families on which the influence of Religion is lost.

Young females! Christian wives! oh, if you knew all that you owe to Christianity, no, your hearts could not be full enough of gratitude towards the God who has been twice your Redeemer For you, not to love Christianity, not to practise its duties with joyous enthusiasm, would be not only ingratitude but suicide!

From the wife let us descend to the child. The child! the little child! At this name all the tenderness of the Christian heart is moved. A religious awe takes possession of our souls. Anxious cares and sweet caresses are lavished on the dear one that bears so heavenly a name. Was it thus among the pagans of Ancient Rome? What was the child in their eyes? Their laws judged that, before its birth, the child did not yet belong to the human species, and they authorised abortion.[1] Soon afterwards they authorised the murder of any child that came into the world, but had not yet rested on a nurse's breast. Augustus confirmed this jurisprudence by his decree and his example.[2] To the murder of the child before or after birth succeeded exposure:[3] this was not only permitted by the laws, but in certain cases was obligatory. Poor child! thou art not yet at the end of thy wrongs! Another law gave the father leave to kill his children.[4] Another, to sell

may sell them like vile animals—the legislation condemns this horrid practice, but the government tolerates it—they may even put them to death, but they cannot give them a dowry. Boys alone inherit. If there are only girls, the property passes with all its rights to the nearest relative in the male line, unless the father of the family has adopted some male child, no matter of what degree of relationship. A barbarous prejudice makes the female sex be considered a degenerate species, inferior to man, It is especially in the upper classes of society that this state of servitude and humiliation is perceived. There is nothing but the Christian Religion that, in China as in the rest of Asia, sweetens the fate of women and gives them the utmost liberty. We may say that Christianity has in some manner restored them to civil life. The difference between Christian and pagan females is so striking that the Chinese call the Christian Religion *the religion of women*."

We should cite all the histories of ancient and modern pagans, if we sought to recount the humiliations of woman, not set free by Christianity. (See the work of M. Nougarède, mentioned above, t. I.)

[1] See the law *Falcidia*, *Digest.*, lib. XXV, tit. ii.

[2] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*. He ordered that the child with which his daughter Julia was *enciente* should be smothered immediately after its birth.

[3] The law permitted the exposure of children without any restriction: this custom was general under the emperors. (See Suetonius, *in Octav.*, c. lxv—*in Calig.*, c. v; Tacitus, lib. V, *Hist.*, c. v.)

[4] A law of the Twelve Tables, whose text was, *Endo liberis justis jus vitæ et necis, venumdandique potestas esto*

them, to buy them, and to resell them till the third time.' Religion joined with the law in oppressing this little being, so much the worthier of compassion as it was weaker: the child was a choice victim, which might be strangled, burned, or otherwise sacrificed, with songs and dances, in honour of some monstrous deity. This horrible custom extended over the whole world.[2]

Even at the present day, an abominable superstition prevailing in India condemns a multitude of children to a cruel death. In a province of the Madras presidency, the cultivators of the soil are in the habit of fattening children and then killing them. While the child is yet alive, they make incisions on its body, and cut off pieces of its flesh, which they send to different parts of their fields and plantations. They let all the blood of the unfortunate child flow out on the ground before it dies, being assured that land irrigated with the warm blood of a child becomes more fertile. Some English soldiers, despatched to one of the villages, found therein no less than twenty-five children in the hands of priests, who were appointed to fatten them, so as to make, at a later date, the infamous use of them that we have just stated. Thus, Old Paganism made the child a victim; New Paganism makes it manure![3]

In Darfur, a province of Africa adjoining Egypt, two children are still immolated every year in order to obtain fine weather and a good harvest!

O children! return thanks to the God Saviour, who, to rescue you from so much tyranny, vouchsafed Himself to become a child. And we also, men of mature age, let us return Him thanks; for we were children in our day. Perhaps many among those who will read these lines must attribute to Christianity alone the benefits of their existence and preservation. Let us love, let us practise this beneficent Religion: wherever it loses its influence, oppression of childhood—exposure—and infanticide reappear!

If fathers treated their children thus, what was the lot of slaves? And first, we must know that out of a hundred and twenty millions of men whom the Roman Empire counted under Trajan, there were less than ten millions of freemen. Such was freedom in the pagan

[1] See Goguet, *Origine des lois.*

[2] It existed among the Carthaginians, the Chanaanites, the Gauls, the Egyptians. It was found among the Mexicans, &c. See the histories of these various peoples. All the details desirable regarding this matter, as interesting as it is little known, will be found in our *Histoire de la famille*, 2 vols., octavo.

[3] This fact is recorded in the English journals of 1845.—In China, of twenty children that are born in the bosom of paganism, there are, on an average, at least *five* smothered and thrown into the common sewer. (Lettre de M. Pinchon, missionaire en Chine, 13 août 1850.)

world. What, then, was slavery? The text of the laws will show us.

According to the ignoble expression of the ancient legislation, the slave was a *thing*, capable of being valued in money, and actually made the object of a base traffic.[1] The conditions of the sale of human creatures were regulated like those of beasts. "Those who sell slaves," says the law, "must declare their diseases and defects to the buyers; if they are prone to flight or vagabondism; if they have not committed some outrages or injuries; if, since the time of sale, the slave has lost in value, or, on the contrary, has gained."[2]

Immediately after this article follows another on the sale of horses and cattle, beginning in the same manner: "Those who sell horses must declare, &c." Now, to be fully conscious that Christianity alone has abolished this usage and prevents its re-establishment, we must not forget that at Constantinople, at Tunis, in America, in many parts of the world, there are markets still held for the sale of human beings.

The master had the right of life and death over the slave, and he did himself no harm by using it. The cruelties practised on slaves make us shudder: a vase broken—an order immediately to cast into the pond the unhandy servant, whose body would help to fatten the favourite lampreys,[3] ornamented with rings and collars! A master put to death a slave for having pierced a wild boar with a spear, a kind of weapon forbidden to bondsmen.[4] Old or sick slaves were often let perish or knocked down. Labouring slaves were branded on the forehead with a red hot iron, and, having been urged on to work during the day by the heavy lashes of a whip, were sent to pass the night chained in dungeons underground,[5] where they received some air only through a narrow luthern. For their food there was distributed to them a little salt. The owner of a slave could throw him to beasts, sell him to gladiators, or force him to infamous deeds. Worthy emulators of their husbands, the Roman ladies would, for the slightest fault, condemn the women attached to their service to the most cruel treatment. If a slave killed his master, all his innocent companions suffered death with him.

So many laws regarding slavery were crowned by that which is known under the name of the *Silanian Senatus-consultum*. This

[1] The legal definition of a slave goes even further: *Non tam vilis quam nullus*—Less vile than nothing.

[2] *Edit Ediles*, lib. XXI, tit. I.

[3] Murænæ.

[4] Cicero, *in Verr.*, v, c. iii.

[5] Called *ergastula*. (See, regarding slaves, *Les Trois Rome*, t. I; and *Les Cæsars*, by M. Champagny, &c.)

law, which no words can properly characterise, which might have been written in letters of blood, was passed towards the close of the reign of Augustus. It ordained that, when a master had been murdered, all those present at the time under the same roof, all those not at a distance sufficiently remote to render it impossible for them to hear his voice or even to perceive his danger, should pay the penalty with their lives. It prohibited any distinction in favour of age or sex, and any regard for excuses whose reasonableness might in no wise be questioned. It rejected all proofs to the contrary: it obliged the deceased man's heir, under pain of a fine, to become himself the accuser of the slaves.

In consequence of this law,[1] Pedanius Secundus, prefect of Rome, having been murdered in his own house, four hundred slaves were pitilessly led forth to capital punishment.

The instincts of Roman cruelty again appear in regard to prisoners of war, who were reduced to slavery, or condemned to fight one another in the amphitheatre,—sometimes to be sacrificed on the tombs of conquerors or the altars of gods.[2] The barbarous law of hatred, which ruled the pagan world, reached to everything. The creditor had a right to tear his insolvent debtor to pieces.[3] A stranger was an enemy: in the language of Pagan Rome, the two were named by the same word.[4] Treated accordingly, the stranger became a victim for the sacrifice. Who will tell the lot of the poor? For them there was not one hospital throughout the whole extent of the Roman Empire: it was thought a crime to relieve them.[5]

To so much heartlessness was added more than insult.[6] When the sight of them wearied the voluptuous rich, would you like to know what means there were of getting rid of them? Ask that

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.*, lib. XIV.

[2] See *Mœurs des Romains*, by Nieuport, lib. IV, p. 21; *Encyclopédie*, art. *Druides*.

[3] Tertull., Apol. iv.—In India, even at the present day, the wretch who cannot pay a debt of *twenty-five shillings* becomes the slave of his creditor. The latter has a right to keep him in irons till some one liberates him. (*Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, n. 51, p. 409.)

[4] Hostis apud majores dicitur quem nunc peregrinum vocamus. (Cic.)

[5] Male meretur qui mendico dat quod edat;
Nam et illud quod dat perit, et illi producit vitam ad miseriam.
(Plaut., *Trinum.*, act. i, sc. ii.)
Plato desires that these *impure animals* should be pitilessly banished from his republic. (*De Legib.*, *Dialog.* xi.)

[6] Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.
(Juv., *Sat.* iii.)

emperor who, having laden three ships with them, gave them a home in the deep sea.[1]

Such was Rome on the day when the Galilean fisherman entered it alone, on foot, without any other support than his travelling staff and his missionary cross, to preach—in that huge Babylon—poverty and penance, humility and charity, the fraternity of all men and their equality before God. It is therefore true that, under the splendid veil of a material civilisation, arrived at the highest degree of development, the pagan world was only a putrid carcass, whose infectious stench mounted to the skies. Need we be surprised if there were soon in the Catacombs of Rome another people, who, by their austerities and their tears, would call for the creation of a new world? In our next lesson we shall visit Subterranean Rome.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee with my whole heart for having delivered the world from the darkness and wickedness of idolatry: grant us the grace to live as children of light and virtue.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will daily say a prayer for the conversion of infidels.*

LESSON VI.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

Christian Rome. The Catacombs.

BENEATH that Rome which appeared in sight of the sun as a great prostitute, decked with gold and purple, but drunk with blood and hideous with crime, there existed, since the coming of the Galilean fisherman, a Subterranean Rome, inhabited by some of the common people. It is time to go down there and to study its inhabitants. Let us enter its dark depths fearlessly: we shall find ourselves in the midst of our own kindred. These are our ancestors in the Faith: they are Christians. This new people, destined to one day renovate the face of the earth, is now charged to place in the scales of the divine justice a counterpoise to that mass of iniquities whose fatiguing history we have just traced.

[1] Lact., *De Mortib. persecutor.*

Thus, to the infamous religion of the old society this young society opposes a holy religion; to its infernal pride, humility; to its luxury, modesty; to its debauchery, fasting and temperance; to its shamelessness, the purity of angels; to its thirst for gold, voluntary poverty; to its law of hatred, the law of universal charity; to all its crimes, prayers and tears. Before developing this comparison, let us study the New Rome. How strange! at Rome, as at Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity was a tomb! It is from the womb of death that life is born: a beautiful image of the moral resurrection of the world by means of the Gospel!

Now, this New Rome, the cradle of Christianity in the West, means the *Catacombs*.

Represent to yourself a subterranean city of many miles in extent, with its different wards, known by illustrious names; its numerous inhabitants, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions; its public squares, its crossings, its chapels, its churches; its paintings, a living picture of the sentiments of the generations whose abode it is; its numberless streets or galleries ranged above one another to the number of four and even five, sometimes low and narrow, sometimes high and wide, sometimes straight, sometimes crooked, running in all directions, intersecting one another, mixing with one another, like the passages of an immense labyrinth; these galleries, these squares, these chapels lighted up from without, at various distances, by openings in the surface of the soil, and from within by millions of earthen or bronze lamps, having the shape of a little boat; everywhere, to the right and to the left, tombs cut horizontally in the sides of these galleries, even to the spring of the arches; these galleries themselves so numerous and extensive that, if they were placed in a line, they would form a street of nine hundred miles in length, bordered with six million tombs. Represent to yourself the Early Christians here, our ancestors and our models, pure as angels, obliged to conceal themselves in order to escape the contagion and the fury of pagan society, offering, with the holy mysteries, their prayers and their tears, either to prepare themselves for martyrdom or to obtain the salvation of the haughty persecutors whose golden chariots roll noisily above their heads. Having represented all this to yourself, yield to the emotions of Faith, and you shall have an idea of the Catacombs in the days of the Infant Church.

The word *Catacomb* means in general a cave, a cemetery, and is applied, in religious language, to those vast excavations in which the Early Christians sought a refuge from persecution and buried the bodies of their companions and martyrs. There were catacombs in a great many cities, as Naples, Syracuse, Carthage,

Alexandria, &c. Those of Rome are the most celebrated and the most venerable; for these immense vaults are exclusively the work of our ancestors in the Faith.

From a description of the Catacombs, let us pass on to their use. First, they served as a retreat for the Faithful. As soon as an edict of proscription was issued, they were to be seen leaving their abodes, according to the counsel of the Divine Master, and burying themselves alive in these vast cemeteries. There, prostrate at the tombs of the martyrs, they asked for one another the grace of imitating them. There, they received, with a fervour that God alone knew, the bread of the strong and the wine that produces virgins. There, those who had not yet been baptised were admitted to the first of the Sacraments. All together heard respectfully the instructions of the Bishop, whose body sometimes shone with the scars of martyrdom. It was thus that the children of the patriarchs, seated under the palm-tree of the desert, used to listen to the voice of the old man whose hairs were white with years.

In nearly all Catacombs indeed we meet halls,[2] sometimes very spacious, of a more or less regular shape, which can have served only for the reunions called *Synaxes*, or for the celebration of the sacred mysteries. These halls, always deprived of the light of day, were lighted up by *lamps* suspended from the roof, some of which have even lately been found still in their places. At other times, these lamps were fixed in little niches, which are yet to be met by hundreds. There were some halls that admitted the daylight by an opening from the roof out on the country above.[3] We have examples of Christians who were precipitated alive into the caverns of Rome by this way, and who thus found death in the places where burial awaited them.

Yet these halls in the Catacombs, with or without air-shafts, required to be continually lighted up by lamps, for the accomplishment of the duties of piety and the mysteries of religion. Hence the immense numbers of lamps found in the Catacombs. Hence, also, without any doubt,[4] the usage which is maintained in the Church, of having *lighted tapers* at the celebration of the holy offices: a venerable usage, which recalls, even at the present day, so many ages after Christianity has obtained permission to profess its worship in the sunlight, those times of misery and trial when it was obliged to hide itself in the dark caverns of the earth.

[1] Regarding Subterranean Rome—the paintings, the usages, and the lives of the Early Christians—see our *Histoire des Catacombes*.

[2] Cubicula.

[3] Cubicula clara.

[4] M. Raoul Rochette, *Tableau des Catacombes*, p. 50; Prudence, *Peristeph.*, *Hymn.* ii; St. Paulinus of Nola. *Poem* xviii, 96-98.

Independently of these halls, more or less spacious, cut out of the tufa, sometimes with a number of *steps* rising all round for the multitude of the Faithful, and a seat leaning back against the chief partition for the Pontiff who presided over the assembly, with pillars of the same tufa supporting the arches, there are met little edifices, partly hollowed out, partly built, which undoubtedly offer us the most ancient models of Christian churches to be found on the earth.

There are also places in the Catacombs where fountains and cisterns are found, which show by more than one arrangement that they served for the administration of Baptism.[1] These, then, were the primitive baptisteries, just as the subterranean temples of which we have been speaking offer us the first models of Christian basilicas. Lastly, we enter halls which would evidently appear, from their arrangement and from the very nature of the paintings that adorn them, to have served for the celebration of the innocent feasts called *Agapæ*. Thus, the first use of the Catacombs was to give an asylum to Christians during times of persecution. We may judge what a life of want and misery they led in these dark retreats, filled with the smell of corpses. Nevertheless, our ancestors preferred to endure all this rather than run the risk of losing their souls by losing their Faith. A great lesson for their children!

To encourage themselves in their trials, they had represented, with colours and otherwise, on the partitions, tombs, vases, glasses, lamps, in a word, on all things of which they made use, such subjects of the Old and the New Testament as corresponded with their situation. Those most frequently met are, *the three children in the furnace*, *Daniel in the lions' den*, *Isaac on the funeral pile*—wherein our forefathers, submitting to similar trials, saw at once an image of the reality, a pattern to imitate, and a motive of consolation and hope; *Noe*, the *Ark*, and the *Dove* bearing in its beak an olive branch—a touching image of the Church, which, though tossed about by persecution, arrives, nevertheless, in the heavenly port; and, from the New Testament, the Saviour in the midst of the most tender scenes—*multiplying the loaves, healing the paralytic, restoring sight to the blind, raising Lazarus from the dead,* always and everywhere as the *Good Shepherd.*

In what constitutes the purely decorative part of these representations, nothing but subjects pleasing and graceful—*pastoral scenery; agapæ; symbols of fruit, flowers, palms, and crowns!* Wholly occupied, amid the trials of a life so disturbed and often of a death so terrible, with the heavenly reward which awaited them,

[1] Aringhi, *Roma subterr.*, l. I, p. 318.

our ancestors saw in death, and even in a cruel death, inflicted by tyrants, only a safe and speedy passage to everlasting happiness. Far from associating with this image that of the privations or tortures which opened Heaven to them, they delighted in adorning it with smiling colours, in presenting it under a variety of beautiful symbols, in surrounding it with vine-branches and flowers; for it is thus that the refuge of death appears to us in Christian Catacombs.[1]

Admirable power of Christianity! During so long a period of persecutions, under the daily influence of sad impressions, our ancestors, hidden in caverns, obliged to pray on graves, and continually occupied with painful duties, did not, for all that, leave in these cemeteries a single image of grief, a single sign of resentment, a single expression of revenge: quite the contrary—everything here breathes sentiments of meekness, benevolence, and charity. "I am very much mistaken, or this remark, which is so quickly justified by an examination of Christian paintings, presents Primitive Christianity in a light as proper to conciliate respect and love as any of the traits of its history or the monuments of its genius."[2]

Besides these paintings which are met at every step in the streets of Subterranean Rome, as the statues of infamous deities would be met at every step in the streets of Pagan Rome, we find countless others. At this first epoch, the teaching of Religion was entirely vocal. Now, as the Patriarchs raised monuments that were ever-subsisting witnesses to the miracles and benefits with which the Lord had favoured them, so our ancestors engraved, painted, and sculptured all the truths of Religion. As an occasion offered itself, the Patriarchs explained to their children the origin and meaning of those monuments of the desert; in the same way our forefathers called to mind themselves, and explained to their children, the meaning of the paintings and sculptures with which they were surrounded.

The principal traits of the Old and the New Testament were represented here. The name and the essential characteristics of Our Lord were to be met with everywhere. He is figured by a fish, because the letters that in Greek form the word fish are the initials of Our Lord's name: "*Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.*[3]

[1] See all this marvellous symbolism explained in our *Histoire des Catacombes.*—See also Mamachi, t. I, pp. 156-164.

[2] Words of M. Raoul Rochette.

[3] Ἰχθύς. On their rings, their medals, and a multitude of other articles of which they made use, we find the sign which is composed of two Greek letters, X, P, the first letters of the word Christ. This sacred sign is beginning to reappear on many objects of modern art. It has been preserved

Under various symbols, they also represented all the Christian virtues, all the holy affections of a soul that loves God. The hart, the horse, the lion, the hare, the dove, and the vine reminded them in turn of the desire of Heaven, ardour in the way of virtue, strength against the devil and the world, a prudent timidity, innocence, and a sweet and tender charity.[1]

Our ancestors had great need that everything around them should support their courage and animate their virtue. For would it be believed—they were not always safe in their dreary abodes? Scarcely was the flame of persecution kindled when the pagans hastened to forbid their entering the Catacombs. If, in spite of the prohibition, they sought a refuge there, their persecutors would besiege them, and oblige them to come forth. Spies, stationed at all the openings, would lay hold on these innocent victims and drag them cruelly before the tribunals. At other times, all the entrances would be closed, and the Christians, unable to obtain relief from their brethren, would die of hunger and thirst.[2] These subterranean places which had concealed their life, also concealed their death. Such was the second use of the Catacombs.

In effect, a multitude of tombs are to be found there. In nearly all the galleries may be seen five, sometimes six rows of niches formed in the tufa, and intended for the reception of bodies. Some could hold only one body; others of a larger size, two, three, or four.[3] Here rest in peace the sacred remains of the first heroes of Christianity: their lively faith and tender charity yet breathing in the ornaments and inscriptions of their tombs.[4]

Such was the life of our ancestors in the Catacombs, and such are the monuments that they have left to us of their abode there. The days of trial that afflicted the Church at her birth succeeded one another so rapidly, that for three centuries Subterranean Rome was the constant dwelling-place of Christians. At intervals between persecutions, they would dwell, amid pagans, in town and country. There, as in the Catacombs, they spread the good odour of Jesus Christ, and delayed with all the power of their virtues the fall of the Roman Empire.[5] "Come to us," they said to it, "or you shall perish; we are the heirs of the future, we have the words of life." The Roman Empire continued deaf to their voice; and, when the hour of the divine vengeance struck, it was only an

in Germany and Switzerland, where you see it on pious engravings, altars, &c. It is an emblematical translation of the saying of the Royal Prophet, *Dico ego opera mea Regi*—I dedicate my works to my King.

[1] Tertull., *Scorpiac.*, c. I, p. 448; Mamachi, t. I., pp. 169-174. Mamachi, t. II, p. 221.

[2] Bisomum, trisomum, quadrisomum.

[3] Murator., *Thesaur. Inscrip.*, t. IV, p. 915.

[5] Tertull., *Apol.*

immense heap of rottenness, over which hosts of barbarians began to dispute.[1]

Meanwhile, our ancestors were placing in the balance, by the sanctity of their lives, a counterpoise to pagan iniquity. To the gross, infamous, cruel, degrading errors of idolatry, they were opposing the Religion of truth and charity, of which they were the martyrs and we are the children.

To the infernal pride of Old Rome, Subterranean Rome opposed humility. *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart:*[2] this lesson of the God of Bethlehem and Calvary, ever present to our ancestors in the Faith, was the rule of their sentiments and their conduct. "We have no wish," they would say, "to be kings, or grandees, or prefects of the Empire. Far from us be the thought of running over seas and lands to satisfy the cravings of avarice! We are free from every desire of vain glory."[3] And their behaviour was only the literal application of this noble profession of humility. Imitators of Our Divine Master, who declared Himself the servant of His own disciples, and who lowered Himself so much as to wash their feet, the rich among the Christians, far from being proud of their better fortune, were eager to humble themselves before the poor. They would wash their feet, visit them, and give them every imaginable testimony of respect and esteem, in order to show the lowly opinion that they entertained of themselves.

This humility, as sincere as it was profound, reigned among all the members of this young society. Tertullian engages his wife not to re-marry with a pagan in case that he himself shall die first. Among the reasons that he gives, he places the general custom of Christian men and women to humble themselves before the poor. "What pagan husband," he says, "would let his Christian wife go to the cross-roads or enter the huts of the poor, that she might visit the brethren and wash their feet?"[4]

To God alone our ancestors referred all the good that was in them: praises made them blush.[5] During the cruel persecution that afflicted the Gauls, the glorious martyrs of Lyons were shut up in a dark prison. Some of the brethren, having come to visit them, gave them the name of martyrs, because they were on the eve of shedding their blood for Jesus Christ. It would not be easy to explain the pain that this caused them. "Ah!" they said, "give this glorious name to Our Lord, the first of martyrs. Give it to those who have suffered death in defence of the Faith, and who

[1] Et nunc, reges, intelligite; erudimini, qui judicatis terram. (*Psal.* ii.)
[2] *Matt.*, vii. [3] Tatian., *Orat. contr. Gent.*, n. 11, p. 264.
[4] Lib. II., *ad Uxor*, c. iv. [5] Just., *Dialog. cum Tryph.*, p. 245.

are now in the blessed country. As for us, vile and contemptible sinners, we do not deserve it. Rather obtain for us by your prayers the grace to arrive happily at that end which is the object of all our desires."[1]

To the unbridled luxury of the pagans, our ancestors opposed a modest simplicity. Living in the midst of the world, they conformed to those usages which were not contrary to piety or religion. They wore clothes suitable to their state and rank. Men who made profession of a more austere kind of life put away the toga and took the cloak: this was the distinctive habit of philosophers and ascetics.[2] Those who retained the toga took care, by their gravity and modesty, to give good example to their brethren.[3]

Persons of an inferior class, satisfied with their condition, had no desire to make an appearance. Simple and modest, their dress bore witness to the purity of their souls. Not for anything in the world would they accept the robes offered them by the pagans, when they could perceive therein the least sign of superstition.[4]

If from raiment we pass to furniture, we shall not be surprised to find in the houses of the Early Christians an absence of all those vain ornaments unworthy of the modesty and simplicity of which they made profession. The mirrors, pictures, chairs, tables, &c., which served for the ornamentation of the house and the use of the family, told how humble were the owners, and how far removed from every kind of vanity. For the rest, their *principles* regarding furniture were clear:—

"Gold and silver vessels, as well as precious stones, are useless: these things serve only to dazzle the eyes. It is also vain to have vessels of delicately wrought crystal and glass. Silver chairs, ewers, and dishes; tables of cedar, ebony, and ivory; beds, whose feet are of silver or ivory; purple or fancy coverlets: all these things are the signs of a soft soul and an effeminate heart. We ought absolutely to have nothing to do with them. How can we suppose that luxury and pride are permitted us who follow the teachings of the Divine Redeemer? Did He not say, "Sell what you have, give to the poor, and follow Me?" Let us therefore imitate the Lord, and cast far from us that pomp which passes away as a shadow. Let us have what is just and cannot be taken from us: confidence in God, confession of the name of the Lord who suffered for us, and charity towards our brethren.

[1] Euseb., l. I, c. xi.

[2] Thus were they called who, living retired from the world, *exercised themselves* in a more perfect life.

[3] Mamachi, *Antiq. Christ.*, t. III, p. 389.

[4] *Act.*, SS. Perpet. et Felic.; S. Cypr., *de Lapsis*, p. 122.

"Alas! if the basin is earthen, can we not wash our hands in it? Can we not eat, if the table that bears our bread has not cost its weight in gold? Will the lamp fail to give us light if it is the work of a potter, and not of a silversmith? As for us, we think that a person can sleep as well on a plain bed as on an ivory one. Let us remember that the Lord used, when eating, a plate of no value; that He made His disciples sit down on the grass; and that He washed their feet: so averse was He to display, though He was the Master of all things."[1]

As we see, it was always by the standard of their Divine Model that the Early Faithful tested the usages of the world and the irregular desires of nature. Profound philosophy of Christianity which made the perfection of the Man-God the touchstone, the rule of the thoughts, words, and deeds of all mankind. Is it surprising that this philosophy should have renewed the face of the earth?

To the debaucheries of the pagans, our ancestors opposed temperance and fasting. *To live to eat*, was the maxim of the old society; *to eat to live*, was that of the young. Following this law, our ancestors were temperate in eating and drinking. Not only were they strangers to those excesses of the table which dishonoured pagans, but they had bidden farewell to all the cravings of sensuality. To support their life, and to acquire the strength that they needed in order to serve God and the neighbour, were the intentions that presided over their repasts. Hence, they made choice of the simplest meats—those more suited to strengthen the stomach than to please the palate. They were convinced that delicate food, instead of nourishing man, is alike hurtful to body and soul.[2]

This wise temperance which they observed in their houses presided likewise at their innocent feasts, called *agapæ*. To eat together has at all times and among all peoples been a mark of friendship. To give a sensible testimony of the tender charity that united them, our ancestors used often to sit together at the same table. A frugal and becoming repast was prepared: the rich defrayed the expense. All the brethren—that is to say, all the Faithful of the same Church—were invited. All ate together: among them no distinction! It was thus that Christianity, even in its least practices, taught men their fraternity and equality before God. How many times did the lamps of the Catacombs shine upon these innocent reunions! In the Primitive Church they took place several times a week. Later on, they were reduced to the three most memorable epochs of life: baptism, marriage, and burial.[3]

[1] Clem. Alex., *Pædag.*, c. iii, p. 156.
[2] Clem. Alex., *Pædag.*, c. i, 139.
[3] Mamachi, t. III, p. 150.

Nothing can be more interesting than the description that the Fathers give of these celebrated repasts, whose very name recalls such tender memories. Tertullian, pleading the cause of the Christians at the bar of pagan society, which could see nothing but excesses and debaucheries everywhere, because it could not live itself without such things, said :—

"The very name of our repasts shows what they are. We call them Agapæ, which in the Greek denotes *charity*. Whatsoever they cost, we always gain by the good that they procure. By them we comfort all the poor. Far from conducting ourselves towards them as you do towards your parasites, who glory in selling their liberty that they may fatten near your tables at the cost of a thousand insults, we treat the poor as human beings on whom the Divinity looks with the utmost complacency.

"If the motive of our repasts is most honest, judge of what passes at them by the spirit of religion with which they are animated. Nothing low, nothing immodest, is tolerated there. It is only after a prayer to God that all go to table. They eat according as they are hungry, and drink as is becoming in those who ar chaste—refreshing themselves like persons about to rise in the night to pray to God. Hands being washed and torches lighted, everyone is invited to sing the praises of God, which he either takes from the Scripture or composes for himself: it is seen hereby how he has drunk. The repast finishes in the same manner with prayer. They depart, not like troops of gladiators, drunkards, or shameless profligates, but as they entered, decently and modestly: it is leaving a school of virtue rather than a supper. We are the same in our meetings as in our houses, the same altogther as individually, doing no harm to any person."[1]

Is it not very remarkable that similar repasts of charity should have been spontaneously established among the savages of the Gambier Islands, newly converted to the Faith? What more sensible proof that the spirit of true religion is the same at all times and in all places? Let us hear one of their Missionaries:—"One Sunday, in this same island of Taravaï, we saw our savages coming very early in the morning, carrying supplies for the day with them: they wished to spend it entirely with us. At the hour of repast, they divided among themselves their little provisions with the utmost cordiality. We beheld these new agapæ with deep pleasure; and, what will surprise you is that we had never thought of recommending anything of the kind to them. It came from them-

[1] *Apolog.*, c. xxxviii; Minut. Felix, p. 308; *Letters of Pliny the Younger to Trajan*, lib. X, *Epist.* xcviii: Mamachi, t. II, p. 94 *et seq.*

selves. They took the idea from an instruction on the Communion of Saints. Repasts of this kind are now an established custom among us: they are called communions. Is there not something herein to rejoice the heart of a poor missionary, under whose eyes these feasts take place with all the simplicity of the Primitive Church?"[1]

To abstain from every kind of excess in food was not enough for our ancestors. Their Divine Master fasting forty days in the desert, the Apostles themselves fasting in spite of their immense labours, the flesh always ready to rebel against the spirit, the obligation of weakening the senses in order to be members of a religion wholly spiritual, but, above all, pagan society plunging daily into new enormities, which called for a new expiation: these thoughts they regarded as so many motives for depriving themselves even of things permitted. Besides the days of Lent, they fasted several days every week: on these occasions, they did not take their repast till after sunset. "With us," say Tertullian and Origen, "Wednesdays and Fridays are days of solemn fast."[2] With the Church of Rome, Saturday was also a fast day. What more touching than the origin of this custom! "Many of the ancients of Rome," writes St. Augustine, "have thought that the custom of fasting there on Saturday arose from this, that St. Peter, having to contend with Simon the Magician on a Sunday, fasted the day before with all the Church of Rome, and, this contest having been attended with such a glorious success, the practice was afterwards retained."[3]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having sanctified the world by the establishment of Thy Gospel; grant us the grace to imitate the humility, temperance, and modesty of our ancestors in the Faith.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will avoid all extravagance in food and clothes.*

[1] Lettre de M. Honoré Laval, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, n. 56, p. 176.

[2] *Epist.* lxxxvi, p. 146. (See also Mamachi, t. II, p. 119.)

[3] Tertull., *lib. de Jejun.*, c. xiv; Orig., *Homil. in Levitic.*

LESSON VII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

Subterranean Rome.

Let us continue the history of our ancestors, and never forget that in their heroic virtues we shall find the secret of their triumph, the glory of their name, and the model for our life.

To the infamous disorders of the pagans, they opposed the purity of angels. Sobriety and fasting are the guardians of the most beautiful of the virtues. So reason, philosophy—even pagan philosophy—and experience declare with unanimous voice. In the absence of other testimony, this alone would suffice to establish the perfect chastity of the Early Christians; but we have other proofs, and they are furnished by the old society itself. Whether it would or not, it was obliged to admit that Christianity made persons chaste, and that modesty was one of the most highly prized virtues of our ancestors.

Tertullian, employing the very words of the pagans, said to them, "In speaking of such and such persons whom you knew, and who before their conversion to Christianity were remarkable for their dissolute and scandalous life, you endeavour to decry them by satirical reproaches, which turn to their praise, so unskilful is hatred! You say, 'Look at this young woman: how coquettish she was! how attractive she was! Look at this young man: how jolly he was! how eager in the pursuit of pleasure! What a loss that they are become Christians!' You do not see that you give to their Religion the honour of having changed them. Not long ago," added the eloquent apologist, "when condemning a Christian woman to infamy rather than to the lions, you proved that the loss of chastity is regarded by us as a more atrocious punishment than all the tortures of death itself."[1]

There were in the course of time many examples of Christian women, whom the judges, as a last means of making them renounce the Gospel, threatened with exposure in places of debauchery. When the barbarians of the North rushed down on the Roman Empire, they found the same love for the angelic virtue still prevailing. "What women there are among the Christians!" they cried out in the transports of their admiration. The young society had such a tender love for purity and continence, that a great many persons

[1] *Apol.*, c. iii. id. sub fin.

consecrated their virginity to God. How miraculous! Augustus could scarcely find six vestals[1] in all Rome; and behold, there are thousands of virgins[2] flourishing like spotless lilies in the little field of the Church! Those who entered the married state observed therein all the perfection of conjugal chastity: it was exceedingly rare to see them pass to second nuptials.[3]

The admirable purity of our ancestors appeared in their exterior Nothing was more striking than the contrast between Christian and pagan women in this respect. The latter painted their faces, perfumed their hair, and loaded their heads with gold and pearls; the former—of reserved and modest habits—never went outside unveiled: the veil did not leave them even in church, particularly if they were unmarried.[4] It was rare to see in their hair the least sign of luxury or vanity. For the rest, they went out seldom; their retirement was even a subject of ridicule to the pagans. But our ancestors made reply, "It is in tones of mockery that you speak of our virgins who live in retirement, whose hands are occupied in spinning wool and their mouth in singing sacred canticles. Ah, blush, blush—you who have raised statues to all the women that have become celebrated by the depravity of their morals!"[5]

Men did not wear their hair long: they cut it. Their portraits, found in the Catacombs, are an evident proof of this. The greater number, especially in the East, wore their beards, but without any dressing-off. They abhorred the silly vanity of the pagans, who dyed theirs, so as to appear younger and more handsome.[6]

Modest in their dress, the First Christians were not less so in their looks and their words. Among them were to be heard no obscene expressions, no remarks with a double meaning, no vulgar jests, none of those *light songs* about which too many persons now-a-days make so little scruple. This angelic purity, this sense of propriety which nothing could set astray, filled the pagans with amazement, and became for a multitude of them the occasion of their salvation.[7]

[1] The vestals were heathen virgins, consecrated to the worship of the Goddess Vesta: they might marry at the age of thirty years. There were only six of them. Out of this small number we count, during the period of their reign, which was about a thousand years, seventeen who were condemned to death for having broken their vow. A much greater number were suspected of having done the same, so true it is that purity is a virtue which grows only in the soil of the true religion.

[2] *Plebem pudoris*, as St. Ambrose says. [3] Mamachi, t. II, pp. 126-132.

[4] Tertull., *de Ornat. mulier.*, lib. II, c. iv; et *de Veland. Virginib.*, c. ii. Also Clem. Alex., *Pædag.*, l. III. [5] Tatian., *Contra Gent.*, p. 169.

[6] See *Roma subterr.*, by Bosio, and the works of Bottari and Boldetti.

[7] Tatian., *Contr Græcos*, n. 29; S. Just., *Apol.* i, n. 14; *id.*, n. 12.

To the insatiable thirst for gold that devoured the pagans, our ancestors opposed voluntary poverty. The Rome of the Emperors was only an immense mart, in which everything went to the hammer, for everything was to be sold: honour, innocence, probity, life. The empire itself was put up for auction by the prætorian guard, and it found a purchaser. In that old society gold was everything; because gold is the source of pleasures, and pleasures were the life of that monstrous aggregation of men. Hence, the assassinations, the poisonings, the rebellions, and the abominations of every kind, that sully every page of its history.

It was quite otherwise with the young society. The child of a God who was born in a stable and who died on a cross, it regulated its sentiments and its conduct according to the example of its Divine Parent: its love for poverty went as far as a voluntary renunciation of riches. Content with what was necessary, the Early Faithful gave the surplus of their possessions to the Church, in order to relieve widows, orphans, and other poor persons, whosoever they were: among them everything was in common. Rich in their Faith and their Hope, they had a supreme contempt for whatever passes away with time.[1] This admirable detachment was both their happiness and their glory.

You reproach us with being poor," they said to the pagans, "but poverty is a title of glory rather than of humiliation. Frugality, of which it is the source, strengthens the soul, as abundance weakens it. Besides, how can you call him poor who has need of nothing, who does not desire anything that belongs to another, and who has God for his treasure? On the contrary, that man is poor who, having great riches, still desires more. To tell you all that we have to say, however poor we are, we are less so than when we came into the world. The little birds are born without a patrimony, and every day provides for their subsistence. All creatures are made for us: we enjoy them, though we do not desire them. He who performs a journey is so much the more at his ease as he carries the less luggage. Hence, on the journey of life, the Christian is the happiest of men: poverty sets him free—he is not burdened with the weight of riches. We would ask riches of God, if we thought them good for anything. What would it cost Him to whom all things belong, to grant them to us? But we prefer to despise them than to dispense them. Our only desires are for innocence and resignation, because we would rather be virtuous than lavish. The rich are the slaves of their gold, and they turn their eyes towards it oftener than towards Heaven: this is folly.

[1] Lucian. Samos., *Dial. Peregrin.*, n. 13

As for us, we are wise, because we are poor, and we teach to all the manner of living well and of regulating their morals."[1]

Lastly, to all the crimes of the old society, the new society opposed its prayers, its tears, a perfect sanctity. We have the proof of this in its daily actions. Our ancestors rose at an early hour. Their first action was to make the adorable sign of the cross, which they frequently repeated during the course of the day. In their eyes it was the weapon most dreaded by the enemy of the human race. We mark our forehead, they used to say, with the sign of the cross, that the devil, seeing the standard of the Great King, may depart terrified.[2] This salutary usage was common among all the Faithful without exception: pious mothers taught it to their children.

When they had dressed, they washed their hands and face: cleanliness was a virtue with them. They also washed themselves before going to prayer. The family assembled in a room set apart for this holy exercise. Morning prayers were begun with the sign of the cross: they lasted a considerable time. Our ancestors were convinced that the morning is the most suitable time to offer up to the Lord a sacrifice of praise.[3]

If there was only one Christian in a house, he was not less faithful to prayer. After making the sign of the cross, he thanked God for having preserved the life of his body and his soul during the past night, and besought a continuance of the divine protection and favour during the coming day. He was like a child that, every morning, came familiarly to ask its Heavenly Father for its daily bread; or like a pilgrim that begged the food necessary to support him on his journey. In Christian households, the father of the family made the prayer, and the others accompanied him in heart.

Though they were convinced that life ought to be a continual prayer, yet the Early Christians had certain hours fixed for this holy employment, because outward affairs and the inconstancy of our mind too often hinder us from thinking of God.[4]

Their attitude in prayer was full of respect. "We pray," says Tertullian, "with eyes raised to Heaven, and with hands extended, because they are pure; with head uncovered, because we have nothing to be ashamed of; without anyone's drawing up a formula

[1] Minut. Felix, *Oct.*, p. 331; id., 123; Lact., *Div. Inst.*, lib. VII, c. i, p. 517.

[2] Tertull., *de Cor. mil.*, c, iv; Orig., *in Ezech.*; Lact., *Div. Inst.*, lib. IV, c. 26; Cyril. Hieros., *Catech.*, xiii, p. 28.

[3] Orig., *in Ezech.*, p. 238; Tertull., *lib. de Orat.*, c. xi, p. 133; Chrys. *Homil.* xliii, *in* 1 *Cor.*, n. 4; Basil., *Epist.* ii, *ad Gregor.*, n. 2.

[4] Prud., *Hymn. Cath.*, p. 30; Clem. Alexand., *Strom.*, lib. VI, p. 772.

of prayer for us, because it is the heart that speaks." Nothing more touching than the custom of praying with hands extended. It was thus that the Divine Master prayed, when expiring on the cross. A new Jesus Christ, the Christian imitates his Model, and gives evidence of his devotedness. "While we pray with hands extended," adds Tertullian, "you may, if you like, tear us to pieces with iron hooks, fasten us to crosses, burn us in fire, plunge the sword into our breasts, cast us to ravenous beasts: the Christian who prays makes known to you, by his very attitude, that he is ready to endure all things."[1]

They turned towards the East. As the rising sun brings light to nature, so the appearance of the true Sun of Justice, Our Lord Jesus Christ, scatters the dark clouds of error, and enlightens every man coming into the world. By turning towards the East at their prayers, our ancestors expressed a hope and a desire to be enlightened by the divine light.[2]

During prayer their exterior was perfectly composed, but without any affectation. Scarcely had they prostrated themselves, when they raised their minds to God, and, penetrated with a deep sense of His presence, spoke to Him as if they saw Him with their eyes. This thought produced in them the greatest humility. They detested their offences from the bottom of their hearts, forgave their enemies, stifled every affection unworthy of a Christian, and besought, above all, the goods of the soul, troubling themselves little about those of the body. To these acts of humility, repentance, and adoration, succeeded the consideration of the infinite greatness of the Divine Majesty, which they glorified through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Then followed tender petitions for themselves, their relatives, their friends, and even their enemies: they knew that a Christian should not be content with forgiving those who wish or do him harm, but should also pray for them.[3]

They finished as they had begun, glorifying the holy name of God by the sign of the cross. All the family arose, and, modestly attired, prepared for the holy sacrifice. Before leaving the house, everyone made the sign of the cross again: then to church! In accordance with the instructions of the Divine Master, our ancestors thought that prayers in common were much more pleasing to God and beneficial to themselves. They heard Mass, and communicated—all. Watchful Israelites, they took care to gather every morning the Manna of Heaven, convinced that it is impossible, without the

[1] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. xxx.

[2] Clem. Alexand., *ubi supra*; Orig., *lib. de Orat.*, n. 31. Auctor quæst. et resp. ad orthod. inter opera S. Just., resp. 108.

[3] Orig., *ubi supra*, n. 8 et 38; Cypr., *lib. de Orat.*, *p.* 107.

Bread of the Strong, to traverse the desert of life. The time of the sacrifice was occupied with prayer, an explanation of the Scripture, and singing of psalms.

After Mass they returned to their houses quietly and recollectedly. They were very careful to repeat to those who could not assist at the reunion, and especially to little children, the instructions of the priests. These duties over—duties that will always be as sweet as they are sacred in Christian families—our ancestors went to their occupations. They employed themselves indifferently in all honest and lawful states. We are not to imagine that, having renounced paganism, they remained useless to society. There were Christians in all conditions. As the Apostles did not leave off fishing after their vocation to the apostleship, so the Early Faithful continued after their conversion the business in which they had been previously engaged. They never left any mode of life but when they found it dangerous to their salvation.

"We are only of yesterday," said Tertullian, "and we fill the whole extent of your dominions—your cities, your fortresses, your colonies, your towns, your council-chambers, your armies—the palace, the senate, the forum. We leave you only your temples."[1] . . "You dare to say," adds the same apologist, addressing the pagans, "that we are useless to the State! How so? We dwell among you without any difference in the manner of nourishing or clothing ourselves—with the same furniture, the same wants; for we are not the Brahmins, the Gymnosophists of India, living in forests, and shutting ourselves off from all kinds of commerce with men. We do not forget to pay to God the tribute of our gratitude for all the works of His hands, and we reject nothing that He has made. Only, we are careful to use everything in moderation, and as we have need of it: we do not indulge more than you in the things necessary for life. Like you we go to the forum, to market-places, to baths, to fairs, to shops, to inns. We sail with you, carry arms with you, till the ground with you, trade with you, practise the same professions as you."[2]

We really find Christians in all states. Jurisprudence may point to Minutius Felix and the senators Hippolytus and Apollonius; the oratorical art, to Quadratus, Aristides, Athenagoras, St. Justin, and Tertullian; the medicinal art, to St. Luke, St. Cosmas, and St. Damian; the military art, to Cornelius, the Thundering Legion, and the Theban Legion. We also see a great many Christians in less eminent professions. For the most part poor, they earned a livelihood by the labour of their hands: they

[1] *Apol.*, c. xxxvii. [2] *Apol.*, c. xlii.

were smiths, potters, tentmakers, weavers, colliers, labourers, tailors, carpenters, shoemakers, fishers. All states had their saints.

God was pleased that it should be so, in order to teach us (*a*) that Religion is powerful enough to sanctify all professions and conditions—that it is not necessary to retire into solitude for the attainment of salvation; and (*b*) that, if we wish to be saved in our state, we must imitate those who have had the happiness of finding their sanctification therein. Let us enter into the views of this amiable Providence, and see how our ancestors attended to their occupations. May their example not be lost upon us!

The sign of the cross always preceded labour, and the singing of sacred canticles often accompanied it. Good faith, earnestness, and patience, presided thereat. In the whole Empire there were no safer or more honest people than the Christians.

About noon, labour was suspended: this was the meal hour. Before sitting down to table, they again made the sign of the cross, invoking the name of the Lord. Before nourishing the body, they considered it just and proper to nourish the soul: hence, they read a few passages from the Holy Scripture. The reading over, they made the sign of the cross on the meats, the wine, and the water, and, after a short prayer, began their repast.

Here is a formula of the ancient *benedicite*, for the preservation of which we are indebted to the celebrated Origen:—"O Thou, who givest food to all that breathe, grant us the grace to use holily these meats which Thy mercy hath prepared for us! Thou hast said, O my God, that when Thy disciples should drink any poisonous drink, they would not experience any ill effects from it, provided they had been careful to invoke Thy name, for Thou art infinitely good and powerful: take away, therefore, from this food whatever might injure the bodies or the souls of Thy children!"[1]

If any priest was present, it was his office to say grace.[2] During the course of the meal, there were sacred canticles sung. This touching usage, which spoke so much of innocence of manners and the joy of a good conscience, had also the advantage of keeping the soul raised to God, and of preventing the utterance of an idle word. Hence, bishops and priests used to recommend the father of the family to teach hymns and canticles to his wife and children, that they might sing them, not only when spinning their wool and weaving their cloth, but also when taking their meals.[3]

The repast over, they returned thanks to the Lord, resumed

[1] Lib. II, in Joan., p. 36.
[2] See Dom Ruinart, *Martyrdom of S. Theodotus*, p. 299.
[3] Clem. Alex., *Stromh.* lib. VII, p. 728; Chrys., *in Psal.* xl, n. 2, p 132

their singing of some sacred canticles, and again read a few passages from the Bible.[1] The time being up, everyone returned cheerfully to work, or to some employment of charity: such as to visit the brethren imprisoned for the Faith—to receive strangers, wash their feet, and prepare food for them—to distribute alms—or to assist the sick.[2]

About three o'clock, they prayed again. Such was, in regard to these matters, their daily order of exercises. At dawn, at nine o'clock, at noon, at three o'clock, they had recourse to the Lord with fervent prayers, being assured that the more frequently we ask the help of God, the more certain shall we be of obtaining a victory over temptations and success in our undertakings.[3] On coming back to their houses, the parents instructed their children. In exchange for their truly Christian tenderness, fathers and mothers received obedience—respect—all the marks of a truly filial piety.[4]

Before supper, the Holy Scriptures were read; and, as at dinner, hymns and canticles sung. The repast over, thanks were returned, and the Holy Books read again. When the time for retiring to rest drew nigh, prayer was made in common. All renewed the sign of the cross over their beds, and lay down modestly to take the necessary sleep.[5] To avoid all the illusions of the nocturnal devil, they rose at midnight and spent some time in prayer.[6]

Such was the life of our ancestors. When it is proposed for our imitation, we reply, "It is no longer the custom!" Truly it is no longer the custom to live as a Christian; doubtless because it is no longer the custom to die as a Saint. It is no longer the custom, but it is not according to the custom that we shall be judged: it is according to the Gospel! Jesus Christ, says Tertullian, is not called custom, but truth; and truth does not change. Wherefore, Christians! what conclusion have we to draw? Either to change our name or our manners.[7]

So many virtues among the common people excited in turn the rage and the admiration of the old pagan society. We shall speak further on of the atrocious manner in which our ancestors were persecuted. Let us here show the splendid homage that was rendered to their sanctity: it is even a persecutor of the Christians that we are going to hear.

Pliny the Younger, Governor of Bithynia, found in his province such an immense number of Christians, that he was perplexed as

[1] Tertull., *Apol.* xl. (See also Cave, *de Relig. et morib. veter. Christ.*, t. I, p. 297.)
[2] Tertull., lib. II, *ad Uxur.*, c. iv.
[3] Clem. Alex., *Stromb.*, lib. VII, p. 722.
[4] Tertull., *de Cor. mil.*, c. xi.
[5] Tertull., *de Cor. mil.*, c. xi.
[6] *Ibid.*, l. II, *ad Uxor.* c. v
[7] Aut muta nomen, aut muta mores.

to what conduct he should observe towards them. For his enlightenment, he consulted the Emperor Trajan in the following letter:—

"I regard it as a duty, Sire, to submit to you all doubtful affairs; for who can better settle my uncertainty or dispel my ignorance? I have never assisted at the trial of Christians, and hence I do not know what is punished or what is sought therein. The great subjects of doubt to me are these:—Is there no difference to be made on account of age, or are the most tender infants to be treated as grown people? May we forgive one who repents, or is it an unatonable crime to have been a Christian? Is it the name without any other crime, or is it the crimes attached to this name, that we are to punish?

"I must explain to you how I have heretofore conducted myself towards those who have been denounced to me as Christians. I inquired of them whether they were Christians. When they acknowledged it, I put the question again to them a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment, and, when they continued obstinate, I had them led forth thereto; for I have no doubt that, whatever they may acknowledge, their great stubbornness deserves to be punished. There are some of them, imprisoned for the same folly, whom I have ordered to be sent to Rome, as they are Roman Citizens.

"Accusations having multiplied, as is usual, a great many cases were brought forward. A list, without the author's name, was circulated, giving the names of a large number who had boasted of being or of having been Christians. When I saw that they invoked the gods with us, and offered incense and wine to your image, which I had brought with the statues of the gods, and moreover that they cursed Christ, I thought myself bound to dismiss them; for it is said that real Christians cannot possibly be induced to do any of these things. Others, named by the informer, and accused of being Christians, denied it immediately. They said that they had been, but that they were so no longer—some for the previous three years, others for a more considerable period, even up to twenty years. All adored your image and the statues of the gods. They likewise cursed Christ.

"Now, here is what they say their fault or their error must be reduced to: that they were accustomed to assemble on a certain day before sunrise, to repeat together in two choirs a canticle in honour of Christ as a God; that they bound themselves by an oath, not to commit any crime, but to avoid theft, robbery, adultery, and the like, and never to break their word or to deny a trust; that they then withdrew, but afterwards reassembled to partake of a

repast, an ordinary and innocent repast; also, that they have given up doing so in compliance with my prohibition, by which, according to your orders, I forbade them to assemble. To make fully sure of the truth, I questioned two female slaves who were said to have served at these reunions; but I could find nothing else than an excessive and ill-regulated superstition. Accordingly, I deferred judgment, and felt anxious to consult you.

"The matter appeared to me worthy of consultation, chiefly by reason of the number of the accused; for a multitude of persons, of both sexes and of all ages and conditions, are compromised and will be summoned. This superstition has infected not only cities, but towns and rural districts. It seems, however, that a remedy may be applied to it. At least it is certain that temples, almost deserted, begin to be frequented, solemn sacrifices celebrated after a long interruption, and numerous victims prepared again in places where there used to be very few to purchase them. We may easily conclude hence that a great many will correct themselves, if room be given to them for repentance."[1]

Trajan replied to Pliny's letter thus:—

"You followed the line of conduct that became you, my dear Secundus, in the cases of those who were brought before you on the charge of being Christians; for we cannot lay down an invariable rule in regard to all. They need not be sought out, but if they be denounced and convicted, they must be punished: in such a way, however, that if anyone declare himself not a Christian, and prove it by sacrificing to our gods, he shall obtain pardon by his repentance, no matter how much suspected in days gone by. As for the lists published without the author's name, they ought not to be admitted as any kind of accusation. Such a practice is very dangerous, and quite unworthy of our age."[2]

Thus, according to Trajan, Christians are not to be sought out, but they are to be punished when accused. "Strange jurisprudence!" cries out Tertullian, "monstrous contradiction! To forbid their being sought out, because they are innocent, and to command their being punished, as if they were guilty! to be mild and cruel at the same time! to overlook and to condemn! Why do you contradict yourselves so grossly? If you condemn Christians, why do you not seek them out, and if you do not seek them out, why do you condemn them?"[3]

This shocking inconsistency was a plain acknowledgment that, in the eyes of the pagans, our ancestors were irreproachable. Hence our Apologists, when pleading the cause of their brethren before the

[1] *Epist.* xcvii. [2] *Apud Plinium*, p. 98. [3] *Apol* c. ii

tribunals of the Empire, defied the judges to convict even one of the Christians of the crimes imputed to them.

"We call to witness the registries of your tribunals, ye magistrates! who daily hear cases, and pronounce sentence in consequence of the depositions made before you. In the crowd of malefactors—murderers, robbers, profaners, perjurers—brought before your tribunals, was there ever a Christian to be seen? Or rather, among those brought before you as Christians, was there ever one guilty of these crimes? It is therefore your own people that fill the prisons and fatten the beasts; it is their cries that resound through the mines. It is among your own that those gangs of criminals are found for the spectacles. Not one of your culprits is a Christian, or he is only a Christian: if he is anything else, he is no longer a Christian.

"We alone then—yes, we alone—are innocent. What is there surprising in this? Innocence is a necessity with us, as we are well aware, having been so taught by God Himself, who is the Perfect Master of it. We adhere to it faithfully, in obedience to the commands of a Judge whom none can despise. Yourselves are the men that have taught you virtue, the men that have commanded it to you. You cannot therefore know it as we do, nor fear to lose it as we do. Well, can one rely on the light of man to know true virtue? on his authority to practise it? His light misleads, his authority is despised. It is easy to escape his laws: they do not reach to secret crimes, and their punishment does not extend beyond the term of the present life. Not so with us.

"Convinced that nothing escapes the searching eye of Him who sees all things, and that there are eternal punishments to avoid, we are the only people who give good guarantees for the practice of true virtue, both because we know its Source and we place it under the safekeeping of the terrors of a future not limited to a few years, but eternal: we fear God, and not the proconsul."[1]

To fear God, and to fear Him alone: this was the motto of our ancestors. It ought to be ours too, if we would arrive at the sanctity of which they set us so noble an example.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given us such admirable models in the Early Christians; grant us the grace to imitate their purity, their detachment from creatures, their sanctity.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will perform my daily actions well.*

[1] *Apol.*, c. xliv, xlv.

LESSON VIII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

Subterranean Rome.

TRUE sanctity does not consist merely in discharging our duties towards God and ourselves: it also requires that we should fulfil our obligations towards our neighbour. We have seen how far the old society was from doing so. To the law of hatred that appeared in all the relations of pagans with one another, our ancestors opposed the sweet law of universal charity. Of all the virtues of the Infant Church, charity was that which most astonished the pagans, because they daily saw it shining forth in a thousand forms, amid the great as well as the little occurrences of life.

Faithful to the precepts of our Divine Master, *Love your neighbour as yourselves; bless them that injure you; pray for them that persecute you; you shall be known as My disciples, if you love one another,* all the members of the young society had but one heart and one soul.

To proceed methodically, we shall first speak of the love of parents for their children, and of children for their parents; next, of the love of husbands for their wives, and of wives for their husbands; then, of the love of brothers and sisters for one another; and lastly, of the immense love of our ancestors for all mankind in general, including even their enemies and their executioners.

While the pagans were not afraid to destroy their child before, or to cast it away inhumanly after its birth, so as to escape the trouble of rearing it, our ancestors regarded children as a blessing, and neglected no means of preserving those that God had given them. Mothers considered it a sacred duty to suckle them, that they might receive with the maternal milk the holy maxims of Religion. With their tenderness was blended a kind of veneration, because they regarded their children as the co-heirs of Jesus Christ, the living temples of the Adorable Trinity, precious deposits of which God should one day require a strict account. Penetrated with such sentiments, the holy martyr Leonidas, father of the great Origen, might be seen softly approaching the cradle of his sleeping son, and, uncovering the child's breast, kissing it respectfully as the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost.

When the time had come for it, the education of their children was their only care.[1] "Either we do not enter the state of marriage,"

[1] Athen., *Legat.*, n. 35, p. 332; *id.*, n. 33, p. 33; Clem. Alexand., *Pædag.*, l. II c. x.

says St. Justin, "or, if we do, it is only to devote ourselves to the education of our children: we live only for them, and to teach them the holy doctrine."[1] As a matter of fact, the capital point in education was to teach children the truths of Religion, and to train them to virtue and works of charity. The Gospel was their *Classics:* it was therein that they learned to think, to love, to speak, and to act like the Man-God—consequently to become useful members of society, and saints for Heaven. Let us hear St. Jerome laying down for a Christian mother the rules that she ought to follow in the education of her children:—

"Think of the sacred duties imposed on you by this precious trust. Hear how a soul, destined to be the temple of God, should be brought up; for the first fruits of all things are due in a special manner to the Lord. The first words and the last thoughts of the child should be consecrated to piety. The joy of a Christian mother will be to hear her child pronounce, with weak voice and stammering tongue, the sweet name of Jesus Christ—to hear the yet ill-articulated sounds of this frail tongue trying their strength in pious canticles. As soon as your daughter is of an age that you may exercise her memory, make her learn the Psalms. Let the Gospel, the writings of the Apostles, become the treasure of her heart; let her every day repeat some passages from them for you—like a beautiful bouquet gathered in the Holy Scriptures for presentation to you. Let these be her first jewels and her fairest robes—the amusements that engage her when she retires to rest and when she awakes."[2]

What wise precepts! And what strong souls they ought to make! Times are very much changed, and manners too! Nowadays, people are in a hurry to load the imagination and memory of children with a heap of useless, and sometimes dangerous, knowledge. Many a time these little ones are worn out by premature study, and, while they are so carefully taught the absurd lies of ancient mythology, we see *Christian parents* who leave them ignorant of the principles of that divine science without which all human wisdom is only error and vanity.

"Guard your child," continues St. Jerome, "against all such reading as would bring within the pale of Christianity a language wholly pagan. What can there be in common between the profane chants of paganism and the chaste harmonies of the Prophet's harp? How can we associate Horace with David, or Virgil with the Holy Evangelists? In vain does a person try to find an excuse in the

[1] *Apol.*, i, n, 29; *id.*, ii, n. 4.
[2] *Epist. ad Læd.*, l. VI; *id. ad Gaudent.*, p. 398.

intention: it is always a scandal to see a virgin of Jesus Christ, a Christian soul, in a place consecrated to idols. It is not permitted us to drink at the same time of the chalice of Jesus Christ and the chalice of devils.' Beware likewise of the maxim that it is good to teach youth at an early age things which they will not fail to know afterwards. It is much safer to refrain from these things, of which a little knowledge leads to further examination: ignorance of evil is the best preservative of innocence."[2]

Our ancestors desired that their children should never be idle They had reading after prayer and prayer after reading, mingling domestic occupations with religious exercises, and thus multiplying their time by a wise variety. They watched with particular attention over the choice of companions among those who were growing up by the side of their children: never did they let suspected servants near them. Within doors and without, they kept a close eye on their plays, their clothes, and their food: on their plays, banishing all amusements in which disorder and confusion prevailed; on their clothes—for Christian modesty, checking excess, desires neither vanity nor slovenliness: it unaffectedly avoids both stylishness and negligence, considering that the one attracts the notice of libertines and the other denotes an absence of self-respect; and on their food—by never encouraging sensuality in any way: it is really well that children should sometimes experience privations, so as to learn that the conditions of their existence in this world are the same as those of many others who can hardly find wherewith to live.[3]

All the lessons of virtue bore their fruit, for our ancestors set an example of them. Their love for their children was as enlightened as it was tender and vigilant. Was there question of procuring the eternal welfare of these dear children? No sacrifice was too great for them. They were the first to rejoice if a holy and glorious death came to restore them to their Heavenly Father, and to put them in possession of their happiness.

Among many examples of this courageous tenderness, we will select only one. The Emperor Valens had commanded the churches of Catholics to be closed. In consequence, our ancestors, preferring to obey God rather than man, used to assemble on Sundays outside the city, to assist at the divine offices. The Emperor, being informed of it, commanded that all Christians found at these reunions should be put to death. The prefect of the city, named Modestus, less barbarous than the Emperor, warned the Faithful privately to

[1] *Epist. ad Eustoch.*, p. 42. [2] *Epist ad Læt.*, p. 594.
[3] *Epist. ad Læt.*, p. 591

hold their assemblies no longer, and acquainted them with the orders that he had received. Next Sunday, the assembly was more numerous than ever. The Governor set out with his soldiers to massacre these generous Christians. As he was passing through the city he saw a poor woman leaving her house quickly—without so much as closing the door—and holding a child by the hand. She was so eager that she made her way right through the hedge of soldiers that lined the street. Modestus stopped her, and inquired, "Where are you going in such a hurry?" "I am hastening to the assembly of the Catholics." "You are not aware then that I am going to put to death all who shall be found there." "I know it quite well, and that is the reason why I am so anxious to be there, not to lose the opportunity of suffering martyrdom." "But why do you take the child?" "That it may share in the same happiness." Modestus, amazed at so much courage, went to the Emperor, and induced him to lay aside his cruel design.

To this unchanging, vigilant, supernatural tenderness of parents, children corresponded with a like degree of affection and respect. Let your attention increase now more and more, that you may form your life according to the pattern of theirs. Imitators of Jesus, who was obedient to Joseph and Mary, they anticipated all the wishes of their fathers and mothers. They assisted them in their labours, and consoled them in their sorrows. If any of these young Christians had the grief to see their parents still idolators, they redoubled their cares for them; but, as firm as they were respectful, they refused to obey them in aught contrary to Religion. This was not enough. Knowing that one of the effects of charity is to instruct the ignorant, they neglected no means calculated to enlighten their dearly beloved parents and to make them renounce paganism.[1] We shall see an admirable example hereof in the acts of St. Perpetua. Sometimes these pious children received only ill-treatment in return for their tender charity; but nothing could discourage them. When prayers were unavailing, they offered up to God the sacrifice of their life for the conversion of the unfortunate authors of their being.[2]

That charity which united parents and children, also united husbands and wives. As this love was chaste and heavenly, husbands gave to their wives the name of sisters.[3] If the husband had any doubts regarding the firmness of his wife in the midst of persecution, he never ceased to encourage her, reminding her of the

[1] Justin, *Apol.*, i, n. iii.
[2] Tertull., *lib. ad Nat.*, c. iv et vii; Arnob., lib. II. *Contra Gent.*, p. 44.
[3] Tertull., *ad Uxor.*, pp. 161 *et seq.*

lessons, the examples, and the promises of the Saviour. Herein, he imitated the Apostle St. Peter, of whom the following incident is related by Clement of Alexandria. This holy Apostle, who had been married, saw his wife arrested by the persecutors and led to martyrdom. He hastened to congratulate her, and, calling her by her name, said, Remember the Lord!' Such was the noble affection of husbands in the beautiful days of the Primitive Church.

That of wives for their husbands was no less perfect. Gentle, affable, submissive, engaging, they did everything in their power to draw them to the Lord, if idolators, or to make them perfect Christians, if catechumens, so that the name of Jesus Christ might be respected even by the infidels.[1]

Brought up in so good a school, brothers and sisters had, as we may say with all truth, but one heart and one soul. Hence, their kind attentions, and the tender care which they took to encourage one another in virtue, and to suffer generously all kinds of tortures rather than expose themselves to the misfortune of an eternal separation, by renouncing the Faith. We see them taking their places together in the amphitheatres, to struggle and die together. If one among them chanced to yield, no words could describe the pain of the others. They wept hot tears, and implored this brother or sister whom they had not ceased to love: they prayed for the wandering sheep till they had brought it back into the path of happiness. This tender friendship survived the wrecks of time: it found expression in a thousand different symbols on tombs and sepulchral urns.[2]

Such was the Christian family in those lovely days of the Early Church. God has permitted this admirable type to be found again in all succeeding ages, as well to avert the evil of proscribing it, and to take away the excuses of negligence, as to show that Religion is always the same—always full of life, and always capable of producing the same effects. As a proof and a pattern, we are about to unveil here the interior of one of these Christian families in modern times. May parents never lose sight of it!

Though education—Christian education particularly—is almost quite neglected in the world, yet we see pious mothers who are most anxious to bring up their children in a manner well worthy of Christianity. But as they have more zeal than intelligence, they often deceive themselves in the choice of the means. In order to put them on their guard against this error, we are going to set before them the example of Madame Acarie, who, having for a long

[1] *Stromb.*, lib. III, p. 448. [2] *Stromb.*, lib. IV, p. 524.
[3] Mamachi. *Dei Costumi*, etc., c. iii, p. 16, et *Antiq. Christ.*, t. III, p. 398.

time edified the world by her virtues, generously renounced all the advantages that she enjoyed, to close her days in the Carmelite Convent of Pontoise, where she attained an eminent degree of sanctity.

Knowing the sway that first habits usually exercise over the heart, this truly Christian mother began early to train her children to the virtues that Religion and society expected from them. To succeed in this enterprise, she was careful to instruct them at the outset in the elements of the Faith. The Curé of St. Gervais, speaking from the pulpit on the ignorance of Religion in which parents left their children, wanted to give an example hereof, and began thus, *If I ask a child, What is Faith?* Immediately was heard, from the midst of the congregation, the voice of the youngest of Madame Acarie's grandsons, answering as if he had been questioned, *It is a gift of God.* And he would have gone on, if his grandmother, who was holding him on her knees, had not put her hand on his mouth to keep him from speaking.

Madame Acarie often spoke to her children of the obligation that they had contracted in Baptism to attach themselves to God alone, and to avoid whatever would offend Him. "She used frequently to tell us," says her eldest daughter, "that she would only love us inasmuch as we should love God; and that if she should know any other child with more affection for God than we had, she would also have more affection for that child than for us."

She inspired them betimes with a horror of lies, and would not forgive one, however slight it might appear. "Though you should upset and break everything in the house," she said one day to one of her daughters, "if you acknowledge your fault on the spot, I will gladly forget it, and no evil shall befall you; but, were you as high as the ceiling, I would rather pay women to hold you than let one single lie pass without punishment: and the whole world could not make me change my mind."

She exhorted them to be always closely united among themselves, and often entertained them on the advantages of concord as well as the sad consequences of dissension. "We must always yield," she would say, "unless when the honour of God requires us to resist: they who yield have always the victory over their opponents."

She required that they should speak gently and courteously to the servants of the house; and when they spoke otherwise, they were not to be answered. Having heard one of her daughters speak in a rather imperious tone, she reprehended her sharply. "You frighten me, my dear friend," she said. "How you do go

about it! And who are you to speak in that style? Never let me hear the like again, unless you want to displease me very much."

She wished that they should obey instantly and unmurmuringly, that they should leave whatever they were doing at the first sign given them; in a word, that they should never have their own will. "It is not right," she one day said to one of her daughters, who showed some repugnance to remain with her at a house, "it is not right that a well brought up daughter should grow tired in the company of her mother, or have any other will than hers." Her eldest daughter, being with her in the country, had a desire to visit a neighbouring town with some ladies of her acquaintance. Madame Acarie consented to it at first; but afterwards, wishing to try the obedience of her daughter, she made her, just when on the point of setting out, come down from the carriage, and ordered her luggage to be removed. The young lady submitted with a good grace. After edifying the whole company, who understood the mother's motive, and who were much affected by the daughter's obedience, Madame Acarie gave her full permission for the little trip that was desired.

She trained her children to that spirit of mortification which characterises the true Christian. In their sicknesses she obliged them to take, without showing any reluctance, the medicines ordered by the doctor. To fortify them against sensuality and intemperance, she used only to have ordinary food on the table, and rarely more than one dish. She required that they should never say what they liked or disliked, and that they should have no hesitation about anything. Nor would she have her children decide on the colour or the shape of their clothes. She did not consult them on the matter, and, while avoiding singularity, permitted nothing that savoured of vanity.

Finally, she neglected no means to inspire her children with humility, because she looked on this virtue as the foundation of a Christian life. Though they were of a noble family, distinguished by its connexions, she would not call them or let them be called by any but their baptismal names. However willing the servants were to serve them, she often wished that her children should serve themselves. "I was very proud," says her eldest daughter. "To correct me, my mother gave me the most humiliating offices in the house, such as to sweep down the stairs; and, because she perceived that I took a time to do it when I could not be seen, and that I closed the door so as to be completely hidden, she enjoined on me to sweep at the very hour when most people came, and to leave the door open when I should be doing it." Her second daughter, who always had a great deal of good sense, used to say the most reasonable things even in her childhood. To crush the seeds of

self-love that were going to bud in her heart, her mother would sometimes appear not to hear her, or would make her hold her tongue.

To facilitate the accomplishment of their duties for her children and to train them to a spirit of order, she drew up a rule of life for them; and her sons, as long as they remained with her, followed this rule, as did also her daughters, in whatever concerned them.

Her daughters, in their early years, used to rise at seven o'clock; and when they were a little more grown, at six o'clock. As soon as they dressed, they said their morning prayers, and these prayers were followed by some reading from a pious book. They were next taken to Mass, which they heard on their knees. During Mass, they recited the Office of the Blessed Virgin; but, afterwards, their pious mother accustomed them to meditate on the adorable sacrifice that was offered up in their presence.

On their return home they applied themselves to work, for Madame Acarie feared nothing so much in regard to her children as a habit of idleness. She herself set the example, by a succession of useful exercises, which occupied the whole day. Even the time of meals was not lost in unprofitable discourse: this saintly woman entertained her children then on matters calculated to improve their minds or to refine their manners.

Every day, with the exception of Sundays and Holidays, the repast was followed by a recreation, which lasted for an hour, and at which the mother assisted, teaching her daughters herself how to use the playthings that she had bought for them, and wishing that they should be at their ease in these moments of relaxation. "Constraint," she would say to such as appeared serious, "is hardly good for anything but to blunt the edge of the mind; and a precocious wisdom usually goes as it comes."

About three o'clock, they recited Vespers. Then there was another pious lecture, and everyone returned to work. In the course of the evening, the two youngest gave an account of the chief thoughts that had occupied their minds during the day. If any dispute had arisen between them, they were required to ask pardon of each other, and, by way of sealing their reconciliation, to embrace. After supper, a portion of the *Lives of the Saints* was read. The exercises of the day closed with an examination of conscience, a litany, and night prayers.

On Sundays and Holidays, Madame Acarie was careful to take her daughters to the Parish Mass, and, in the afternoon, they returned to hear a sermon and Vespers. When they came home, they should give an account of what had been said in the pulpit, and the hour of repast was usually consecrated to this exercise.

When there was any Indulgence to be gained, this pious mother would lead her daughters herself to the church specified, in order to obtain for them a favour so precious in the eyes of Faith. On these occasions, as well as in Lent and on Solemn Feasts, she took care that her daughters had some money at their disposal for distribution among the poor. Her greatest delight was to see them acquiring the habit of performing good works.

Her daughters were yet very young when they began to approach the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; but their youth did not prevent them from reaping its salutary fruits. Their mother neglected no means of having them ready to communicate on all the principal festivals of the year, and still more frequently when they had made some progress in piety. She prepared them herself for this great action, speaking to them of it several days beforehand, and helping them to make suitable acts.

Children, however well brought up, may receive in a moment the most fatal impressions. Madame Acarie watched assiduously to let no persons but such as were well known to her for their virtue and prudence come near her children. From the same principle she desired to find in the masters whom she selected for her children vigilance and firmness, joined with piety and learning. When it excited surprise that she had preferred M. Blancy, with whom she was in no way related, to M. Calvy, whom she esteemed highly, she said, "M. Calvy is mild and indulgent; M. Blancy is severe, and overlooks nothing in his scholars: this is what I want for my children." For the rest, it would be hard to believe that there was anything disagreeable in her manners towards her children. "She treated us most kindly," says her eldest daughter, "but she joined with this kindness a gravity so majestic, so imposing, that it seemed impossible for us not to do what she desired."

Wisely severe towards her children when they committed any fault, she gave them a thousand tokens of affection when they pleased her. In such moments her heart seemed to overflow, so great was her joy. She would promise to give them whatever they should ask, provided their requests were reasonable; and she would keep her word faithfully. In their sicknesses, she cared for them herself, spending nights by their bedside, and rendering them all the services that they needed. The charity with which this good mother waited on them encouraged them to bear their sufferings patiently: they complied with all that she desired, in order to spare her fatigue by their speedy recovery. Lastly, they learned of her to overcome themselves, when it should be necessary for them to render the same services to others.

An education so careful produced the fruits that might be

expected from it. To it were Madame Acarie's three daughters indebted for the happiness of being admitted to Carmel, where, after occupying the first places, they died holily. *If her sons*, to use the expression of St. Francis de Sales, *tarried on the way*, and even caused their mother some uneasiness at times regarding their salvation, the honourable positions which they filled in Church and State, and the bright hopes which the same prelate conceived of them when he saw them again in Paris, a year after their mother's death, prove that at length they benefited by the education which they had received.

Let us return to the Early Christians. The triumph of Christian charity, as well as the everlasting glory of our ancestors, was that they loved their neighbour—that is to say, all mankind—as themselves.

First, the Christians were united among themselves by the bonds of the most tender love: the pagans were amazed and even jealous at it.[1] "Speaking of us," said Tertullian, "you remark, 'How they love one another!' This surprises you, because you are very far from resembling us. 'How ready they are to die for one another!' And you—you are much more disposed to strangle one another. As for the name of *brethren* that we give ourselves, your fault-finders decry it, because among them every kind of relationship is only the testimony of a pretended affection. We are also your brethren by the law of nature, our common mother, though you are rather bad brethren, with very little that is human about you. But how just a right have we to regard ourselves as such, we who have the same Father—God; we who have been enlightened by the same Spirit of Sanctity; we who have been born to the same truth, after leaving the same ignorance! Among us, all things are in common. Even the property that we possess—which, with you, nearly always dissolves fraternity—unites us as brethren."[2]

"In all those charitable names," says another Father of the Church, "that are in use among us, you only behold an expression of the sentiments that animate us. We call our inferiors, our sons; our equals, our brethren; and our superiors, our fathers. For the same reason, we call Christian women by the names of daughters, sisters, and mothers, according to their age."[3]

This tender charity appeared differently in regard to different kinds of persons. Full of reverence for the ministers of the Lord, to whom they were indebted for the life of grace, our ancestors were eager to provide for their wants. They understood that ecclesiastics,

[1] *Apol.*, c. xxxix.
[2] Lucian., *Dial. Peregr.*, p. 337.
[3] Athenag., *Legat.*, p. 330.

devoting themselves entirely to the salvation of their brethren, cannot attend to the demands of their own subsistence. The offerings of the Faithful supplied them with what was necessary: food and raiment."[1]

But it was especially in regard to confessors imprisoned for the Faith that their charity showed all its generous courage. Scarcely had they learned that one of their brethren was arrested, when all, men and women, old and young, ran to the prison. They began by recommending themselves to the prayers of the future martyr, after purchasing the gaoler's permission to enter, to kiss his chains, to serve him, and to provide for all his wants.[2] If the alms of the church of which the prisoner was a member did not suffice, the Bishop and the Priests wrote to other churches, which hastened to assist them: every church had a reserve fund for this purpose.[3] "Every one of us," says Tertullian "brings his little monthly tribute, when he pleases and as he pleases, in proportion to his means; for no one is bound to do this—all is voluntary. We have thus a pious fund, which is not wasted in repasts or useless dissipations. It gives food to the needy, and defrays the expenses of their burial. It maintains poor orphans, as well as servants worn out by age and affliction. It relieves those who are condemned to the mines, banished far from their country, or kept in prison for God's sake."[4]

The eagerness of our ancestors to visit the confessors of the Faith was so great, that the Bishops sometimes felt themselves bound to moderate it, lest they should further provoke the fury of the persecutors.[5]

Wherever there was misery to relieve, there the charity of the Early Christians was to be found: their hands were full of alms, and their hearts overflowed with consoling words. From the cells of the imprisoned, let us pass to the huts of the poor and the beds of the sick. If any particular church required means for the support of its poor, it had recourse to its sisters, the other churches. In a little while Deacons might be seen arriving with alms and affectionate letters. At other times, the greater churches would ask for the poor themselves, that they might attend directly to all their wants.[6]

It would not be easy to form a just idea of the respect and tender care with which these suffering members of the Saviour were treated. Not content with assuaging their pains, our ancestors

[1] Mamachi, t. III, p. 26.
[2] Lucian., *Peregr.*, n. 12, p. 334.
[3] Lucian., *Peregr.*, n. 3; Euseb., l. IV, c. xxiii.
[4] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. xxxix
[5] Cypr., *Epist.* x et xii.
[6] Cypr., *Epist. ad Eucrat.*

endeavoured to comfort them and to maintain their patience and courage. They could not be kept away by the contagiousness of disease. And, how admirable! they bestowed the same care on their persecutors. In a plague that desolated Egypt, the Christians were to be seen along the roads tending sick and abandoned pagans, carrying them to their own houses, and rendering them the same services as they rendered their own brethren.[1]

They also took great care of children: especially orphans, the children of Christians, and above all of martyrs. They delighted in saving abandoned children, and all those whose masters they might be, in order to bring them up in the true Religion. The Roman Church was distinguished among the others by her charity towards the poor, no matter who they were. During the reign of Pope St. Cornelius, about the year 250, she fed more than five hundred poor persons. From the time of her establishment, she was always careful, as long as the persecutions lasted, to send large sums to poor churches in the provinces and to confessors condemned to the mines.

It was the Deacons that took care of all these living treasures of the Spouse of Jesus Christ. On them it devolved to receive and guard the offerings made for the common wants of the Church, as well as to distribute such offerings according to the directions of the Bishop. It was also their duty to inform themselves of the wants of each individual, and to keep an exact list of the poor supported by the Church.[2] Hence, the life of Deacons was a busy one: they should often come and go through the city, and sometimes even make long journeys. For this reason they used not to wear cloaks or heavy garments like Priests, but only tunics and dalmatics, so as to be always ready for action.[3]

But what most struck the pagans with astonishment was, not to see Christians of the same Church and the same country loving one another with so tender a love, but to see that a strange unknown Christian should be welcomed, lodged, entertained, loaded with marks of affection, by those who had never seen him before, and who, in a little while, should be sure of never seeing him again. Their hatred induced them to spread the false report that Christians were a secret sect, whose members had signs for recognising one another. Minutius Felix refutes this odious calumny thus:—"What enables us to recognise one another, is not, as you pretend, any outward sign, but it is innocence and modesty. We love one another, though it grieves you to acknowledge it, because

[1] Euseb., l. VII, c. xxii.
[2] *Const. Apost.*, l. III, c. xix.
[3] *Const. Apost.*, l. II, c. lvii.

we cannot hate. We call one another brethren, because we are the children of one Father, the Creator of all mankind, and we have the same Faith and the same Hope."[1]

Provided a stranger showed that he made profession of the Orthodox Faith and was in communion with the Church, he was received with open arms. If any man had a thought of denying him admission to his house, he grew afraid of rejecting Jesus Christ Himself. But one should make himself known.[2] For this purpose, they who travelled into foreign lands carried letters from their Bishop with them. The first act of hospitality was to wash the feet of the guests: this solace was necessary, considering the manner in which the ancients covered their feet. If the guest was in full communion with the Church, his new friends prayed with him, and showed him all the honours of the house. He said grace, he had the first place at table, he addressed instructions to the family: it was a pleasure to have him: the repast of which he partook was more holy.[3] Ecclesiastics were honoured according to their rank; and if a Bishop travelled, he was everywhere invited to preach, and to exercise his other functions, in order to show the unity of the priesthood and of the Church.[4]

But what is much more admirable is that our ancestors treated even unbelievers with hospitality. They also obeyed with great charity the commands of the prince who obliged them to lodge soldiers, officers, and others travelling on state affairs. St. Pacomius, having been enrolled very young among the Roman troops, was put on board with his company. He landed in a city where he was surprised to see the inhabitants receive them with as much affection as if they were all old friends. He asked who these people were, and was told that they were Christians—the members of a particular religion. He made further inquiry regarding their doctrines, and this was the beginning of his conversion.[5]

Slaves cast off by their masters on account of age or infirmity, exiles, the poor of every kind, on whom pagans looked with contempt, were sure of finding a generous welcome with the young society. To relieve so many wants, our ancestors were not content with giving away their goods, and making themselves poor in order to assist the poor: they even sold themselves. Examples of this heroic charity were not rare, as we learn from the words of Pope St. Clement in his letter to the faithful of Corinth.[6] One will suffice to make known to us the spirit that animated them.

[1] *Oct.*, p. 312.
[2] Baron., an. 143, n. 7.
[3] Tertull., *Præscript.*, c. xx, et Mamachi, t. III, p. 40.
[4] *Const. Apost.*, l. II, c. lviii.
[5] *Life of St. Pacomius.* (See also Fleury, *Mœurs des Chrétiens*, p. 260.)
[6] *Epist.* i, n. 4, p. 36.

A Christian, named Serapion, met a heathen comedian, whose unhappy state touched him very much. To procure his conversion, he sold himself as a slave for the sum of twenty pieces of silver. His carefulness in fulfilling his duties did not hinder him from finding some leisure moments for prayer and meditation. Bread and water were his only food. At length, his conduct and language produced their effect. The comedian was converted together with his family, and renounced the theatre. Serapion was set at liberty ; but he did not remain so for a long time.

He soon sold himself again, in order to be able to relieve an afflicted widow. His new master was so pleased with his services that he set him free, and gave him besides a suit of clothes and a book of the Gospels. Scarcely had Serapion departed when he met a poor man, to whom he gave his outer garment. At some distance further on, another poor man, benumbed with cold, received his tunic. There was nothing left to cover the Saint but his inner linen garment. A person having asked him what had become of his clothes, he replied, at the same time showing the book of the Gospels, " It was this that stripped me." The book did not remain long in his possession. He sold it to relieve a person in extreme distress; and, being asked what he had done with it, he said, " Would you believe it ? The book seemed continually to cry out to me, *Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor.* I sold it therefore, and gave the price to the needy members of Jesus Christ."

Serapion, who had nothing left but himself, disposed thereof several times again, if we may so speak, in order to procure spiritual and temporal aid for the neighbour Among those to whom he sold himself was a Manichee, whom he had the happiness of bringing over with all his family to the true Church.[1]

If our ancestors were so eager in relieving the corporal wants of the neighbour, can we doubt of their zeal for the salvation of souls ? It would be too long to relate all that they did for the conversion of sinners, of heretics, and even of their most cruel enemies: it was for them that they offered up their tears, their fasts, and their supplications.[2] Let us hear Tertullian :—" For the salvation of the emperors (and these emperors were the Neros and the Domitians) we invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God. We ask for them a long life, a peaceful reign, a valiant army, a faithful senate, submissive subjects, and all that the man or the emperor can desire."[3]

Faithful soldiers, peaceable and conscientious citizens, our

[1] See Godescard, 21 March.
[2] Mamachi, *De Costumi*, t. III, pp. 61-66.
[3] *Apol.*, c. xxx.

ancestors acquitted themselves faithfully of all the duties that society requires. "As for the public taxes," says Tertullian, "we pay them honestly and exactly: the laws may be thankful that there are Christians in the world, for Christians acquit themselves of this duty from a principle of conscience."[1]

The charity of our ancestors, which extended to all the living, did not forget the dead. The better to show their belief regarding the resurrection, they took great care of burials, and went to great expense with them, considering their manner of living. After washing the body, they embalmed it. "We employ more spices thus," said Tertullian, "than you pagans waste in incensing your gods."[2] They wrapped it in very fine linens or in silks; sometimes they dressed it in more costly garments. They laid it out for three days, taking great care to watch round it in prayer.[3] They then carried it to the grave, having lighted tapers or torches in their hands, symbolic of the charity of the deceased as well as of the resurrection to come, and singing psalms and hymns full of sweet hope.[4]

They also prayed for the departed soul: the holy sacrifice was offered up, and one of those feasts called Agapæ was celebrated. Other alms were also given. The *memory* of the deceased was renewed at the end of a year, and this practice was continued from year to year, besides the commemoration daily made in the holy sacrifice.[5]

To honour the dead and to leave a record of their lives, various tokens of their dignity were often buried with them, such as the instruments of their martyrdom, and vials or sponges filled with their blood; also, the acts of their martyrdom, their names, medals, leaves of laurel or some other evergreen tree, crosses, and Gospels. The spices used were in such large quantities, and the tombs so well closed, that twelve centuries afterwards they still yielded a most agreeable perfume.[6] The body was always laid on the back, the face turned towards the East. This position was indicative of hope, and like the last cry of immortality.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having replaced the law of hatred, which reigned under Paganism, by the sweet law

[1] *Apol.*, c. xlii. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Baron., an. 34, n. 310
[4] *Const. Apost.*, vi; Prud., *Hymn. exeq.*
[5] Tertull., *de Coron. mil.*, c. iii; Orig., *in Job, Homil.* iii; Cypr., *Ep.* xlvi Mamachi, t. III, pp. 67 *et seq.*; Fleury, p. 263
[6] See our *Histoire des Catacombes*, and Boldetti, *Osservazioni sopra cimiteri*, etc., lib. I, c. xxix, p. 307.

of universal charity; grant us the grace to imitate the admirable examples left us by our ancestors.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never say anything of others that I would not wish them to say of me.*

LESSON IX.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued*).

Subterranean Rome. Details regarding the Martyrs.

A SINCERE and tender piety, a universal charity, a perfect sanctity, formed the character of the Early Christians, with a few exceptions, during the long space of three hundred years. "We do not want to deny," said Tertullian, "that there are among us *some* men abandoned to their passions; but, to prove the divinity of the Christian Religion, it is enough that their number should be *small*. It is impossible to find any body, however perfect we may suppose it, without some imperfection; but much good by the side of a little evil displays the perfection of society."[1]

So many virtues astonished the pagans, and perhaps we ourselves are tempted to imagine that the example of our ancestors is no longer to be imitated by us. Three things, however, are certain. The first, that we are called like them to sanctity by the very fact of our vocation to Christianity. The second, that God refuses us none of the means necessary to become saints. The third, that by adopting the means and the precautions which our ancestors made use of, we may imitate their virtues. They were what we are: why may not we become what they became?

As we have seen, they spent their days in prayer, in labour, and in the practice of works of charity. What prevents us from following their example? Knowing all the weakness and corruption of nature, they distrusted themselves, and carefully avoided the occasions of sin. What prevents us from imitating them? Once gone over from Paganism to Christianity, they no longer wished to have any impure contact with the old society. They shunned not only its books, its profane songs, its temples, but also its theatres, its feasts, its dances. Their reasons for so doing are as strong today as ever. Now as formerly, all profane assemblies are an occasion of scandal and sin. We are in no small degree astonished at

[1] Tertull., *ad Not.*, l. I, c. v, p. 43. (See also Mamachi, pref., pp. xvii-xxxi)

the similarity that exists between the books, the songs, and the theatres of our own times, and those of old, heathenish times. It is one proof more that the world is returning to Paganism, and that the same spirit that reigned therein eighteen hundred years ago is endeavouring at the present day to recover its empire.

In the first place, the Early Christians did not go to theatres: this is a fact acknowledged even by their enemies. The example of ancestors so venerable ought to suffice to regulate the conduct of high-born children. However, if we wish to ask them the reason for their conduct, they will answer us as they answered the pagans, "You ask us why we do not go to your plays. It is because we know all their danger."[1] Now, is not the danger the same to-day as formerly?

Let us hear Tertullian, and, after meditating on his words, say, with our hand on our heart, whether his history of the performances of his day is not the history of those of our day:—

"The theatre is properly the sanctuary of profane love: people go there only for pleasure. The charm of pleasure enkindles passion. Let me suppose that a person attends with seeming modesty and composure: who will assure me that, under this phlegmatic appearance, this mask put on by art and rank, the heart is immovable—that there is not a secret agitation in the depths of the soul? People do not seek pleasure without attaching themselves to it when it is found. Now, it is impossible to be attached to pleasure without some affection for it, and this very affection is the sharpest sting of the pleasure that is tasted there. Let the affection cease—no more pleasure: only weariness, uselessness, waste of time, and, I ask you, does all this agree with the character of Christians? Whatever a person may himself think of shows, in vain will he say that he assists at them only with regret, that he even detests them, that he blushes at the company in which he finds himself: he encourages by his presence those who make such amusements their resort He contradicts himself. What his mind condemns, his example justifies. We become the approvers of evil, when we countenance those who commit it. It is not enough that we are not actors, when we comport ourselves as accomplices. There would be no actors, if there were no sight-seers.

"At the theatre, impure love enters the heart by the eyes and the ears. There, women sacrifice themselves to public incontinence in a manner more dangerous than would occur in places that dare not be named. What mother, I do not say what Christian mother but one with an idea of decency, would not prefer to see her

[1] Minut. Felix, *Octav.*, pp. 8 et 26.

daughter in the grave rather than on the stage? What! did she bring her up so tenderly and with so many precautions for this disgrace? Did she day and night hide her under her wings with so much care, to surrender her to the public and to make her a rock of scandal for youth? Who does not regard these unfortunates as so many wandering slaves to whom shame is lost? And see how they exhibit themselves in the crowded theatre with all the paraphernalia of vanity! Is it only a trifle for sight-seers to indulge their luxury, to reward their corruption, to run the risk of becoming their prey, and to go to learn from them all that they should never know?

"If we ought to have the greatest horror of immodesty, can it be permitted us—from whom there will be demanded an account of every idle word—to hear or to see what we are forbidden to say or to do? An interdict is therefore laid on the theatre by the very fact of its being laid on all kinds of immodesty.

"What we solemnly renounced in Baptism, it is not permitted us to do, or to say, or to witness at hand or afar off. Now, no matter what name the scene goes by—tragedy, comedy, or pantomime—its subject is an intrigue against morality or humanity: weakness or crime is the sum of all that is to be seen.

"Tell me, what does tragedy teach you? Nothing but imaginary and improbable adventures, which, during the greater portion of the time, only recall to your mind some cruel or shameful deeds, far better forgotten, or rather develop in your heart some sad germs that make themselves known by too faithful imitations.

"What does comedy teach you? What does it set before your eyes? Adultery and unfaithfulness, the guiles of seduction and the dishonouring of married people, indecent buffooneries, parents tricked by their servants and their children, imbecile and debauched old men.

"Pantomime? It reveals to you all the disorders of an insolent luxury, all the things of which a Christian mouth is afraid to speak. What a school for morals, or rather what a source of crimes! What an incentive to every vice!"

After showing that plays are an occasion of sin, and that they are forbidden to the Christian by his baptismal vows, Tertullian examines the pretexts that people allege in justification of their presence thereat. Not a single modern sophism in favour of them, but was foreseen and triumphantly refuted by the eloquent apologist!

"People say to us, At my age, in my rank, with the strength of my principles or the evenness of my mind, I have nothing to fear from shows. Your age! Whoever you are, it cannot save you from

the dangers of the theatre. If young, they are most to be dreaded by you. How can you defend yourself from the attacks of voluptuousness, which besieges you at all the senses and finds there so many helps? Duty will not hold you fast against sights that move your whole being, and speak more forcibly to your heart than to your conscience. Old age itself is not a sufficient preservative. No, the chills of age do not extinguish fires that have been long lighted, and whose activity has only increased with time.

"Do you say that the position which you occupy makes it a necessity on you? I answer you that the Christian Faith admits no necessity but that of obeying the Law of the Lord. Do you say that there are circumstances which will not let a person dispense himself from attending? I tell you that no person is permitted or can be permitted to offend God. You think yourself secure by your disposition. I appeal to experience. After its daily lessons, I ask you who ever came forth from a theatre as he entered it? And if I ask your conscience, what will it answer me? By what road did you go to the play? By that of passions which wanted to be satisfied. What did you go to see? All that might please you, and all that you are forbidden to imitate. Candidly, was this a place for a Christian? An enemy is not found in the camp unless when, unfaithful to his prince, he has deserted his colours. What! one moment you are in the Church of God, and the next in the temple of the devil; lately you were in the company of heavenly spirits, and now you are sunk in a pit of filthy mire! What! those hands which you have just raised to God, have been clapped for an actor! The very mouth that was opened to chant our holy mysteries, has shouted forth the praises of a prostitute! What will henceforth prevent you from singing hymns to the glory of Satan?

"But do you say, I choose only good pieces, and decent displays are simply schools of morality? Where then are these good pieces? Say rather that you choose the less wicked. Here the choice does not lie between what is good and what is wicked, but between what is more and what is less wicked. Do they not all breathe more or less of the most perfidious of the passions? And then, do not these pieces change their nature when they are acted, and become a thousand times more dangerous by the seductive circumstances that surround them? You go to the theatre as to a school of morality! you go to look for models of Christian virtues! Ah, what fine models of humility, patience, and chastity, are your theatrical heroes and heroines! What worthy interpreters of the Scripture are your dramatic poets! What noble instruments of the Holy Spirit are your actors!

"But I go to keep my children in company. And by what right do you permit them to go? Was it not enough, then, for you to have communicated to them the fire of concupiscence by begetting them? Was it also necessary that you should consume them by leading them to the furnace of all the passions? But it is to train them. Well, well! could not your daughter be trained without having a comedian set before her, or your son without a clown?

"But it is a mere pastime. I answer that the hand which prepares the poisonous draught of gall and hellebore, also rubs the cup with sweet and enticing juices, in order to hide treachery and death. These are the manœuvres and artifices of the devil. People applaud the beauty of the scenes, the melody of the songs, the excellence of the poems, even the purity of the morals: honeycombs! The vessel into which they pour out their rich streams will be none the less poisoned. The charm of pleasure is not worth the risk that accompanies it. Fear these dangerous charms. Let reckless libertines, abandoned girls, malicious souls, go to the theatre: for them it was made. Our joys, our festivities, are not yet ready: we cannot sit at the same table, because we cannot have them as our companions. Everything in its time: for them, the joys of to-day; for us, the tribulations. The world, says Jesus Christ, shall rejoice, but you shall be made sorrowful. Let us therefore bear affliction while the pagan rejoices, that we may rejoice when his affliction begins, lest by sharing in his pleasures we should also share in his torments."[1]

The horror that our ancestors manifested for unbecoming shows, they also manifested for dances and other profane festivities.[2] The pagans did not fail to reproach them with this. They answered, "Truly Christians are *savages*, enemies of the state, because they do not assist at your festivities, and, being devoted to the true Religion, they celebrate the emperor's feast-days with a joy wholly

[1] *De Spectaculis.* Tatien, *Orat. contr. Græcos*, p. 279; S. Theophilus of Antioch, *ad Autolyc.*, p. 416; S. Cyp., *de Spectac.*; Lact., *Instit. div.*; S. Basil, *Homil.* iv, *in Hexaemeron*; S. John Chrys, *Homil.* xv *ad pop. Antioch.*, et iii, *in Saul. et David*; S. Ambr., *de Fuga sæculi*; S. Aug., *Confess.*, lib. III; Salvien, lib. VI, *de Provident.*, etc., etc.

Councils: Elvira, in 305, can. lxii and lxv; First of Arles, in 314, can. v; Third of Carthage, in 395, can. ii; Fourth of Carthage, in 598, can. lxxxviii; Africa, in 424, can. xxviii or lxi, can. xxx or lxiii, can. cxxix; Second of Arles, in 432, can. xx; Sixth General, in 680, can. ix; Synod of S. Chas. Borromeo, in 1568; Synod of Bourges, in 1584, can. iv.

Comedians themselves, the authors of plays, and frequenters of theatres, use the same language. Their views harmonize with those of the Fathers and Councils of the Church in condemning spectacles. (See their acknowledgments in Després de Boissy, *Lettres sur les spectacles.*)

[2] See Mamachi, t. II, p. 188

interior, not with debauchery! A great proof of zeal indeed to light bonfires and spread tables along the streets, to have banquets in public squares, to convert Rome into a tavern, to pour out streams of wine, to run in crowds hither and thither, to provoke one another by insults, by scandalous bravado, by impudent looks! Cannot public joy then be manifested in any other way than one that is disgraceful? Does that which violates courtesy on all other days become courteous on the feasts of the emperor? Oh, how truly deserving of death are we, for offering up prayers for the emperor, and taking part in the general rejoicings, without ceasing to be chaste, modest, and reserved in our manners!"[1]

Could a more striking picture be drawn of what occurs among us at certain periods of the year, on certain days given up to public festivity? A humiliating reproach! which shows that a section of society has become heathenish. As for us, the children of Christians, our conduct is traced out for us in the example of our ancestors. We have the same reasons for keeping aloof from all guilty amusements. The flight of the occasion is the safeguard of virtue.

Hitherto we have been sketching the two societies that existed eighteen hundred years ago after the preaching of the Galilean fishermen. We have seen the condition and manners of Pagan Rome. We have also seen the very different condition and manners of Subterranean Rome—the sacred abode of the Early Christians. We must now assist at the dreadful combat that is about to take place between the old and the new society.

But as it is always error that attacks, since error always comes after truth, it is the old society that begins the combat: it makes its entrance by calumnies. It should first make those appear odious whom it wished to destroy: violence always seeks to deck itself out in the robes of justice. Here the Jews and the Pagans made common cause. The blinded descendants of Abraham and Jacob, instead of doing penance for their deicide, filled up the measure of their iniquities by madly persecuting the disciples of the Messias. Foreseeing the ruin of their figurative worship, they were the first to raise the cry of alarm. No sooner had they become acquainted with the design of the Apostles to carry the Gospel thoughout the whole world, than they wrote letters and sent off messengers in all haste to prejudice minds. "A new sect has risen up," they said, "whose members bear the name of Christians: it supports atheism, and destroys all laws; its doctrine is impious, abominable, sacrilegious."[2]

To represent Christianity as the destroyer of every virtue and

[1] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. XXXV. [2] S. Justin., *Dial. cum Tryph.*, p. 235.

the enemy of every government, was to draw on the heads of its followers the hatred of peoples and kings. These atrocious calumnies met with only too much success. The pagans adopted them, and the impressions that they left were not effaced for two hundred years afterwards.[1] It is even said that the Jews preserve to this day, at Worms, on the Rhine, one of those letters which were sent everywhere against Jesus Christ and His disciples.[2]

Rumour, which is always on the wing, added other imputations, and in a short time the Pagans, drawing their conclusion from so many calumnies, looked on Christians as the most wicked of mortals, and held them responsible for all the calamities, great and little, that befell the empire. Their very name was a crime: to bear it was to be guilty of all kinds of misdeeds. Hence Tacitus, relating that Nero burned alive a great many Christians whom he falsely accused of having set the city of Rome on fire, remarks very simply that they were not condemned so much for any public crime as for their hatred of the human race.[4]

It was to refute all these odious accusations that God raised up so many eloquent apologists. They were obliged to ask as a favour that Christians should not be condemned without a hearing, and that their mere name should not be regarded as a capital offence.[5] The conduct of the Christians was a still more eloquent reply to all accusations. But hatred is blind. The Pagans and the Jews, not content with closing their eyes that they might not see the virtues of our ancestors, closed their ears that they might not listen to reason, shut up their hearts in a triple case of brass that they might not feel any sentiment of humanity, and armed themselves with axes and swords that they might immolate the victims of their fury. Blood soon flowed in rivers over the whole earth, and Heaven had to crown millions of martyrs.

Let us here enter into some details regarding these heroes of the Faith. Let us speak of their names, their numbers, their acts, and the circumstances that accompanied their deaths.[6]

The name *martyr* means witness. It denotes a person who has suffered torture, and even death, in testimony of the truth of Religion. We apply it especially to those Early Christians who laid down their lives in defence of the truth of the facts on which Christianity is founded. The Saviour had foretold that Religion

[1] Orig., *in Cels.*, l. VI; Tertull., *ad Nat.*, l. I, c. xiv.
[2] Tillemont, t. I, p. 148.
[3] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. xi.
[4] *Annal.*, l. XV, c. xliv.
[5] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. i, p. 11.
[6] For proofs and other particulars, we refer to our *Histoire des Catacombes;* to P. Florès, *de Inclyto agone martyrii*, in fol.; and to our *Prefaces* to the acts of the martyrs in the *Bibliothèque des classiques chrétiens.*

should have martyrs. When charging His Apostles to preach the Gospel, He said to them, *You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.*[1] Moreover, He explained to them that their testimony should be a testimony of blood: *You shall be afflicted and put to death; you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake.*[2] But He immediately encouraged their timidity by adding, *Fear not them who can kill the body and cannot kill the soul. If anyone confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven; but if anyone deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father.*[3]

From these sacred words, Tertullian rightly concludes that the Christian Faith is an engagement to martyrdom.[4] Do we think on this?

The number of martyrs cannot be counted:[5] a few facts on the matter will give us some idea of it.

1. During the space of three hundred years, there were ten persecutions, general throughout the whole extent of the Roman Empire, and the Roman Empire comprised at this period the greater portion of the known world. In the fourth century there were two limited persecutions—in Persia and Africa, under the Goths and Vandals: one alone lasted forty years and made two hundred thousand martyrs.[6] Now, after the journeys of the Apostles, there were Christians in all parts of the world. In Tertullian's time they were so numerous that they filled all places, except the temples of the gods, and had they desired to avenge themselves on the Romans, they should only have had to withdraw and the empire would have become a desert.[7]

2. Such a slaughter was made of Christians that in the city of Lyons alone there were nineteen thousand martyrs: no regard was had to age, sex, or rank.

3. The number of victims was so great that, in the beginning of the fourth century, Diocletian and Maximian boasted of having at length exterminated the race of the Christians and annihilated their Religion.[8]

Already, before the great persecutions, and in the beginning of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote thus:—"Wherever our holy mother the Church is found, she sends to Heaven before her, by martyrdom, a multitude of her children,

[1] Act., i, 8. [2] *Matt.*, xxiv, 9. [3] *Matt.*, x, 28 and 32.
[4] Debitricem martyrii fidem. (*De spect.*)
[5] The most exact calculations place it at eleven millions during the first three centuries. (See our *Histoire des Catacombes*, p. 564 et suiv.)
[6] Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* [7] *Apol.*, c. xxxvii.
[8] Nomine Christianorum deleto, superstitione christiani ubique deleta.

whom she offers to the Father as a pledge of the exceeding love that she bears to Him. But other assemblies have no martyrs. The Church alone delights in opprobrium, that she may testify to God the excess of her charity, and the greatness of that faith which makes her boldly confess Jesus Christ. Many a time have we seen her weakened by the loss of her blood and her members, and then suddenly recovering, acquiring new strength, and becoming the mother of a greater number of children."[1]

By suffering death, the martyrs proved the divinity of Religion since they showed the literal accomplishment of the Saviour' prophecies. They also proved it by their supernatural constancy To suffer death without any interested motive of vanity, ambition hatred, or worldly glory; to suffer it amid the taunts of a whole people; to suffer it with a sweet serenity; to suffer it when it may be avoided by one word; to suffer it in defence of a Religion opposed to all the passions—a Religion in which a person has not been reared, but which he has embraced out of conviction, and in the expectation of having to sign it with his blood; and when this has been done, not for a day, but for centuries, not by one person only, but by millions of persons of every age, rank, state, and country: if this is not something supernatural, we must throw reason to the winds and never again think of linking two ideas together.

The pagans were so fully convinced that the courage of the martyrs came from God alone, that they were converted in great numbers at the sight of their constancy in the midst of tortures. "The constancy with which you reproach us," says Tertullian, "is a lesson. On beholding it, who is not inclined to ask its cause? Any man who examines our Religion, embraces it. He at the same time desires to suffer, in order to purchase, by the shedding of his blood, the friendship of God and the forgiveness of his offences."[2]

In short, the Saviour had promised to His Apostles a grace that would render them superior to tortures, and He kept His word.[3] This is the whole secret of the constancy of the martyrs: to seek any other is not only idle, but ridiculous. What a testimony in favour of Religion is the red signature of so many millions of innocent and heroic witnesses! Impiety may destroy the temples of the martyrs, burst open their tombs, scatter their sacred ashes on the ground, and obliterate their epitaphs, but never can it touch this testimony of their blood.

[1] Lib. IV, c. lxiv. (See, in regard to the number of martyrs, Dom Ruinart, *Actes des Martyrs*, pref.)

[2] *Apol.*, c. l.

[3] Luc., xxi. 15 et 19, Joan., xvi, 33; Philipp., i, 18.

The accounts of their trials and their executions are called the *Acts of the Martyrs.* Nothing more venerable, save the Holy Scripture; for the answers of the martyrs to their judges were inspired by the Holy Ghost! Our Lord had promised in clear terms to answer for them and to speak by their mouth. *Trouble not yourselves,* He said to the martyrs of all ages in the persons of the Apostles, *as to what you shall say in reply; for the Spirit of your Father will Himself speak by your mouth.*[1] Nothing is better calculated than the history of the martyrs to revive our piety. A noble-minded son feels his heart inflamed on hearing the story of his father's splendid deeds. How then can we remain cold and cowardly, insensible to the joys of Heaven, when we see that, to reach that happy land, the martyrs waded through a sea of blood, or walked on live coals and the edges of swords? The Early Christians were so convinced of this truth, that they often risked their lives to recover the Acts of holy martyrs.

The first means, and one of the most ordinary that they used, in order to procure these Acts, was to win over by money the clerks of the office in which the registers were kept, and to obtain copies from them. They had a second means no less worthy of their Faith. When the judges were about to torture any Christian, several of the Faithful who were unknown mixed themselves up among the pagans, and noted carefully the questions, answers, and other circumstances of the trial. These different accounts were gathered together and taken to the Bishop.[2] His approbation having been given, the narrative was distributed to the Faithful, who made it the ordinary subject of their reading. The Acts of the Martyrs were also read in the Church on assembly days.[3]

If our ancestors venerated the history of the martyrs so much, they venerated the martyrs themselves a good deal more. No sooner were the martyrs arrested than they became sacred beings, and enjoyed several prerogatives. At their petition, communion was given to those who had fallen in time of persecution. Deacons were appointed to visit them, to encourage them, and to provide for their support. With the Deacons were associated Deaconesses. These were virgins or widows, from forty to sixty years of age, wise, prudent, of tried virtue and zeal. Some of the services that Deacons rendered to men, the Deaconesses rendered to women. Their duty was to visit such persons of their sex as had been

[1] Luc., xxi.

[2] See a few details hereafter in the Fourth Part of the Catechism, at the Feast of All Saints; and more extensive ones in *l'Histoire des Catacombes,* p. 505 *et suiv*

[3] Dom Ruinart. *Actes des Martyrs,* pref

arrested on account of the Faith, or were deserving of the cares of the Church in consequence of poverty or sickness.[1]

If sometimes the rest of the Faithful could obtain admission to prisons, everyone sought to kiss the chains of the confessors. Everyone made haste to procure them some relief, to bathe their wounds, to render them little services, or to show them marks of reverence.

Thus the Church neglected no means of visiting the martyrs and providing for them. The eve of their death, when sentence had been pronounced, was the occasion of the *Free Supper :* that is to say, it was then permitted to all the condemned to eat together.[2] For this purpose they met in a common hall, round a table prepared by the Christians with as much care as their poverty permitted. The public might assist at the repast of the martyrs. Christians did not fail to exhort the holy confessors to perseverance, or to recommend themselves to their prayers and to receive their last advice.

After the execution our ancestors hastened, when it was possible, to take away the remains of the martyrs. They wrapped them in gold and silk, with the most exquisite perfumes. It was round their tombs that they used to assemble to pray, and on their tombs that they offered up the holy sacrifice. The Councils of Africa forbade the erection of any altar without its having some relics of martyrs : a venerable law, which is still observed throughout the whole Church. Judging rightly that the martyrs who had shed their blood for Jesus Christ were most powerful in Heaven, our ancestors invoked them confidently. Festivals were instituted in their honour : the days of their martyrdom were chosen to celebrate them. These days were called those of their *nativity* or birth. An admirable idea! which called to mind that on the days of their death they were born to a true life. The Church has not failed to continue this language.

[1] In ordinary times, they instructed female catechumens, or rather repeated for them the instructions of the catechism. They presented them at Baptism, and assisted them to undress and to dress, that no person might see them in an improper state. They had the newly baptised under their guardianship for some time, in order to form them to a Christian life.* In the Church, they kept the doors on the women's side, and took care that everyone was placed in her rank and observed modesty and silence. The Deaconesses gave an account of all their offices to the Bishop, and, by his orders, to Priests or Deacons. They were chiefly useful in informing them of the wants of other women, and in doing, under their directions, what they could not do themselves with so much propriety.†

[2] See *Acts of St. Perpetua,* and Godescard 6th April.

* *Const. Apost.*, l VI, c. xvii—l. VIII, c. xix ; Tertull., *de Veland. Virg.*
† *Mœurs des Chrétiens*, p. 254

St. Augustine will tell us what was the worship rendered to the martyrs. This holy doctor, writing against Faustus the Manichee, who accused Catholics of having substituted the martyrs for idols, answered him in these terms: "If Christians honour the holy martyrs, it is through a desire of sharing in their merits, or with the hope of being made happy by their prayers, or in order to excite themselves to an imitation of their virtues. Hence, the altars that piety raises on their tombs are not erected to any martyr, but to the God of martyrs. What Priest of the Lord, ascending the altar, ever said, It is to you, Peter!—it is to you, Paul!—it is to you, Cyprian! that we offer sacrifice? What is offered, is offered to God, to that God who crowned the martyrs. True, we often offer it in the places where He crowned them, but it is in order that the sight of those sacred places may excite in our hearts a more ardent charity, a warmer love both towards those whom we ought to imitate and Him for whom we ought to imitate them. We reverence the martyrs therefore. But the worship of *latria* is that of which we believe and teach that God alone can be the object. Now, sacrifice being an essential act of this worship, we do not offer it to Martyrs, to Saints, to Angels. If any one of our people were to fall into such an error, we should immediately oppose him with sound doctrine, that he might enter into himself, or that others might justly shun him."[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the sanctity and courage that Thou didst give to our ancestors: grant us the grace to imitate their watchfulness over themselves and their constancy amid the trials of life.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will hold worldly assemblies in horror.*

[1] *Contr. Faust.*, l. XX, 21.

LESSON X.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY, *continued.*)

Beginning of the Great Conflict between Paganism and Christianity. Ten Great Persecutions. The First under Nero. Character of this Prince Details of the Persecution. Judgment of God on Nero. Judgment of God on Jerusalem: Destruction of the City and Temple. Second Persecution under Domitian. Character of this Prince. St. John cast into a Caldron of Boiling Oil. Judgment of God on Domitian.

HITHERTO we have followed our Mother, the Infant Church, by the good odour of her virtues. We are now about to follow her, for three centuries, by the traces of her blood, and the glare of the funeral piles lighted to destroy her. O tender Spouse of the Man-God! gird thy loins: the hour of conflict is come! Ten times is the whole world about to rise against thee, in order to blot out the memory of thy name.[1]

In point of fact, we reckon ten great persecutions, that is to say, ten persecutions urged on by the Roman Emperors, whose terrible power extended over the greatest part of the known world. There were other persecutions called particular ones, because they were confined to a few kingdoms: such were those of the Emperors Licinius and Valens—those of Sapor, King of Persia, which lasted forty years—and those of the Goths and Vandals in Africa and elsewhere.

Let us now go forth from the Catacombs, in which we have admired the future victims. Let us re-enter Pagan Rome, and direct our steps towards the imperial palace, where we may have a close view of the first executioner of Christians. He cannot but be the most wicked of men. To prove it, we need only name him: he is Nero. Let us give his character.

Nero was born in the year of Our Lord 35. Adopted by the Emperor Claudius, he succeeded his benefactor in the year 54. All the vices that are held in horror by the human race were soon seen to be growing rapidly in Him. He began by poisoning Britannicus, the son of Claudius. One crime brought on another: Nero, given up to the corruption of his heart, soon forgot even that decency

[1] With Dom Ruinart, we count ten general persecutions, that is to say, ones commanded or authorised by the Roman Emperors, the masters of the world. Not that each of them extended to all the provinces of the Empire: some were confined to particular countries. Father Mamachi counts twelve, because he includes in the number of great persecutions that of the Jews under Barcochebas and that of Licinius.

which the most abandoned are wont to observe in their excesses. He spent whole nights in the streets, in taverns, in houses of ill-fame, followed by a band of unbridled youths, with whom he fought, stole, and murdered. To remove the last restraint, he decided on the death of his mother, Agrippina. He first tried to drown her. This attempt not succeeding, he caused her to be stabbed: the Senate approved of this atrocity. Nero, finding that he had as many slaves as subjects, no longer cared for any rule but that of his foolish fancy: he became a comedian. Thus, an emperor was to be seen playing publicly in the theatre like a common actor! When he was about to sing in public, guards were stationed at a number of places to punish those who should not appear sufficiently affected by the charms of his voice.

His cruelty, like that of all malefactors, kept equal pace with his luxury. Octavia, his wife, and Burrhus and Seneca, his preceptors, were sacrificed to his rage. These murders were followed by so many others, that he was no longer regarded as anything but a wild beast thirsting for blood.

Hearing a person speak in this proverbial style, "Let the world burn when I am dead!" he replied, "And I say, Let it burn and may I see it!" A long time did not elapse till, after a banquet as extravagant as it was disgusting, he caused the four corners of Rome to be set on fire, that he might have a picture of the burning of Troy. The conflagration lasted eight days. Of the fourteen wards of the city, ten were reduced to ashes: this lamentable sight was a feast to him. To enjoy it at his ease, he ascended a high tower, from which he began to recite, in the dress of a comedian, a poem composed by himself on the destruction of Troy.[1] All the people accused him of the incendiarism.[2] But Nero laid the blame on the Christians: no one believed him, says Tacitus.[3] This did not prevent the pagans from being delighted, on account of their aversion for Christianity, to see those who made profession of it punished. Nero, on his side, wished not only to avenge the injury done his reputation, but also to satisfy his hatred of virtue and to glut his thirst for human blood

Christians, who were treated as victims of the public hatred, were therefore arrested in every direction. To torture was added insult, and their death was a matter of amusement to the people. They were covered with the skins of beasts, in order that dogs, deceived by this cruel resemblance, might tear them to pieces. Others

[1] This happened in the year of Our Lord 64.

[2] The truth of this accusation is confirmed by the testimony of many historians well deserving of credit. We may consult Suetonius and Dion Cassius and, among moderns, Tillemont, Crevier, &c.

[3] *Annal.*, v.

were covered with garments of pitch or wax,[1] then fastened to crosses or posts at the end of streets, and set on fire, to serve as lamps during the night. Nero wished that his gardens should also be the scene of this frightful display, at which it was a diversion for him to assist, dressed out as a charioteer, and driving along by the glare of these dismal lights.

The number of Christians that perished in this manner, is known to God alone, who crowned their victory. As for us, we know that these glorious victims were the first-fruits of that countless multitude of martyrs whom the Church of Rome sent to Heaven. They preceded on the path to glory SS. Peter and Paul, who had taught them the truths of salvation.

The fire of persecution, once kindled in the capital, spread rapidly through the provinces. Edicts were issued forbidding the profession of Christianity under the severest penalties, not excepting death. Carnage became lawful: while Nero applied himself to the torturing of Christians in Rome, they were pursued throughout the whole empire with like fury.[2]

Among those numerous victims whose names have come down to us, we count the glorious martyrs Tropes and Evellius. Tropes was one of Nero's chief officers, and one of those fervent Christians of whom St. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Philippians: *The Saints salute you all, and chiefly those of the house of Cæsar.* Having been buffeted and scourged, on account of his Faith, by order of Satellicus, he was exposed to the beasts; but he received no wound from them. He was at length condemned to be beheaded, and thus consummated his martyrdom.[3]

Lactantius tells us in express terms that the true motive which engaged Nero to ill-treat Christians was the worship of his gods, whom he saw abandoned by an ever-increasing multitude: the burning of Rome was a mere pretext. 'Nero," he says, "having learned that St. Peter had withdrawn many of the Romans from idolatry, and that not only at Rome, but throughout all the provinces, there were crowds abandoning the worship of the gods, thought that he had no more time to lose, and that he could destroy the heavenly empire of Christianity, as well as the piety which maintained it. He was therefore the first to persecute the disciples of the Saviour; but he did not do so with impunity. The Lord, beholding the oppression of his people, laid his hand upon the tyrant."[4]

Nero should learn, like all succeeding persecutors, that no one

1 Tunica incendialis. 2 Sulp. Sev., *Hist.*, l. II; Oros., *Hist.*, l. III, c. v.
3 See *Roman Martyrology*, May 17. 4 *De Mort. persecut.*, l. II.

is strong against God. And hence the dreadful circumstances of his end must serve as a monument to posterity, saying to all ages—Thus shall he be treated who dares to rebel against the Lord and against His Christ! If you refuse to strengthen the empire of the Lamb, by obeying His laws, you shall strengthen it by teaching others to fear Him.

The crowned monster was still bathing in the blood of Christians, and wasting provinces, in order to gorge his slaves and to satisfy his luxury, when a cry of indignation was heard from the depths of Spain. Vindex wrote to Galba, the governor of Tarragonian Gaul, *to have pity on the human race, of which their detestable master was the scourge.* Galba caused himself to be proclaimed emperor. In a short time the whole empire recognised him. The senate—yes, the senate, that mean servant of every tyrant—declared Nero a public enemy, and condemned him to be thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock, after being dragged naked through the streets and scourged to death.

Having heard of the punishment intended for him, Nero fled towards the house of one of his freedmen, and during the night hid himself in a marsh under a covering of reeds. When he reached the house, he was offered a piece of brown bread, which he refused, and drank only a little warm water. Warned that he was pursued on all sides, he caused his grave to be dug, exclaiming at every alarm and in tears, "Must so good a musician die?" At length, hearing the tramp of horses, he put a dagger to his throat, and besought someone to end his life. No one was willing to render him so dangerous and culpable a service. "What!" he cried out in despair, "is it possible that I have neither friends to save me nor enemies to kill me?" At length his secretary gave his suicidal arm a thrust, and freed the world from a tyrant that had no equal. His statues were dragged through the mud, and his palace burned. Nero died in the year of Our Lord 68—the thirty-third of his age. He had reigned fourteen years.

Whoever has read the life of Nero will say with Tertullian, "We look upon it as honourable to our Religion that the first of its persecutors was Nero; for it is enough to know what he was, in order to understand that such a prince could not condemn anything but what was eminently good."[1] We shall soon see that the other emperors who persecuted Christianity had little more to boast of.

If Nero should serve as a monument of God's justice, the Jews should also teach men what is the cost of rebelling against Jesus

[1] *Apol.*, c. iv.

Christ. Not satisfied with imbruing their hands in the blood of the Messias, they sentenced to death His disciples, and were, by their calumnies and their outrages, the most eager persecutors of the Infant Church. Meanwhile, the measure of their crimes was filling up. The time drew nigh when the blood of the Man-God, of the Prophets, and of the Apostles, should fall upon the heads of this guilty people. The total destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews throughout the whole earth, should, by verifying the predictions of the Saviour, afford a new proof of His divinity.

Let us listen in awe to the history of the destruction of Jerusalem. The Lord would not leave this hardened people without a warning of what was about to befall them. Forty years before the sack of the deicide city, which takes us back to the time of Our Lord's death, strange things were continually being seen in the temple. On one occasion there appeared, at the ninth hour of the night, and for the space of half an hour, so great a light around the altar and the temple, that it seemed broad day. On another, the gate of the temple looking towards the East—which was of brass, and so heavy that twenty men could scarcely move it—opened of itself, though it was fastened with large locks, with iron bars and bolts that entered deep into their sockets, hollowed out of one massive stone. Another time a fearful noise was heard in the sanctuary, and immediately afterwards a mournful voice repeated several times, *Let us depart hence!* The holy protecting Angels declared aloud that they should abandon the temple, because God, whose abode it was for so many centuries, had forsaken it.

Every day there were new prodigies, so that a famous rabbi once exclaimed, O temple! O temple! what is it that disturbs thee, and why art thou afraid of thyself?[1]

Dreadful signs also appeared over the city. A comet, having the shape of a sword, rested over Jerusalem for a whole year. For a long time, throughout Palestine, there were to be seen in the air chariots, full of armed men, traversing the clouds, and encompassing cities as if to besiege them. Four years before the beginning of the war in which Jerusalem was destroyed, the whole Jewish people had a terrible presage of what was coming upon them.

Josephus the historian refers to it in these terms:—

"Jesus, the son of Ananus, who was a mere peasant, having come from the country for the Feast of Tabernacles, began to cry out, while the city was yet in a profound peace, 'A voice from the East, a voice from the West, a voice from the four winds! Woe to Jerusalem! Woe to the temple! Woe to all the people!' Day

[1] Babylonian Talmud, in Galat., l IV, c. viii, p. 209.

and night he continually passed through the city repeating the same thing.

"The magistrates, unable to endure words of such evil import, caused him to be arrested and severely punished. He did not utter a word of excuse or complaint, but went on crying out as before, 'Woe to Jerusalem! Woe to the temple!' He was then brought before Albinus, the Roman governor, who had him beaten with rods till he was all bleeding.

"Pain did not make him ask pardon or even shed one tear, but, at every stroke given him, he repeated in a plaintive voice, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' When Albinus asked him who he was, whence he came, and why he spoke thus, he only answered, 'Woe!' At length he was dismissed as a fool; but he did not change his language. His cries became more numerous on the days of the feast. It was remarked that his voice, though so much and so violently exercised, did not grow weaker.

"He continued this course till the war began, that is to say, for four years and five months uninterruptedly, without speaking to anyone, without injuring those who struck him, without even thanking those who gave him something to eat. When Jerusalem was besieged, he was shut up in the city, and, wending his way untiringly around the ramparts, used to cry out with all his might, 'Woe to Jerusalem! Woe to the temple! Woe to the people!' At last he added, 'Woe to myself!' That moment a stone, thrown by an engine, struck him dead."[1]

Must it not be said that the divine vengeance appeared visibly, as it were, in this man, who lived only to announce its decrees; that it filled him with its strength, in order that his cries might bear a due proportion to the misfortunes of the people; and that it made him not only a prophet and a witness, but also a victim of these misfortunes, in order that the threats of God might be rendered more sensible to all the world? This prophet of the woes of Jerusalem was called *Jesus*. It would seem that the name *Jesus*, a name of salvation and peace, should become a sad omen for the Jews, who had despised it in the person of the Saviour, and that these ingrates, having rejected a Jesus who offered them grace, mercy, and life, should be obliged to receive another Jesus, who had nothing to announce to them but irremediable evils, and the inevitable decree of their approaching ruin.[2]

Meanwhile, the fatal hour was drawing near. The Jews, urged on by a strange turbulent spirit, rebelled against the Romans.

[1] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, b. V, c. xi and xii.
[2] *Hist. abrégée de l'Eglise*, p. 20.

This rebellion was the occasion of their ruin. The wisest of the nation quitted Jerusalem, foreseeing the evils that were about to burst upon it, and the Christians, mindful of the Saviour's predictions, followed this example—withdrawing to the little city of *Pella*, situated amid the mountains of Syria. The Roman army was not slow in laying siege to Jerusalem. It met at first with a slight check, which emboldened the rebels; but, the command having been given to Vespasian, it soon recovered itself. Division then set in among the Jews. Various parties were formed throughout the city, and, between them, they committed the most horrible excesses. Thus the unfortunate city found itself distressed on all sides: within, by cruel factions; without, by the Romans. Vespasian, informed of what was occurring in Jerusalem, let the Jews destroy one another, that he might more easily attain his end.

Having, in the meantime, been proclaimed emperor, he charged his son Titus to continue the siege. This young prince encamped at the distance of a league from Jerusalem, and closed every avenue to it. It being then about the Feast of the Pasch, a great multitude of Jews, come from all parts of Judea and even from distant lands, found themselves shut up in the city. All the provisions in their possession were soon consumed. Famine began to be sharply felt, and Jerusalem presented an image of hell.

The factious plundered one house after another. They abused those who had concealed any food, and obliged them by cruel tortures to bring it forth. Many sold their inheritance secretly for a measure of wheat or barley. The greater number were soon reduced to the necessity of eating whatever they could find, and even this they strove to snatch from one another. The bread that children held in their hands was stolen from them, and, to make them let it go, they were crushed down to the ground.

There were some armed parties whom hunger induced to leave the city in search of herbs. Titus commanded his cavalry to watch them. With them were also taken some of the people, who durst not surrender without a struggle, lest the seditious should avenge themselves on their wives and children. Those who were thus captured with arms in hand, Titus caused to be crucified without any distinction, as well on account of the trouble of guarding them as to frighten the besieged. Five hundred—sometimes more—were crucified daily, so that there was a want of crosses and convenient places for their execution. The seditious availed themselves of this sad prospect to animate the people. Dragging the relatives and friends of the sufferers to the wall, they showed them how wise a thing it was to surrender to the Romans!

To complete their starvation, Titus resolved on enclosing them

more perfectly. He made his troops raise round the city a wall six miles long, strengthened with thirteen small forts, in which guard was kept day and night: this great work was accomplished in three days. Thus was literally verified the prediction of the Saviour, who had announced to Jerusalem that its enemies should surround it with a wall, and gird it on all sides.

It was then that the famine became most dreadful. People raked the very sewers, and ate the most disgusting filth. A woman, prompted by hunger and despair, took the child yet at her breast, and, gazing on it with wild looks, said, "O wretched one! why should I keep thee? To die of hunger, or to become the slave of the Romans?" That moment she killed and roasted it. Then, eating the half of it, she concealed the rest. The factious, attracted by the smell, entered the house, and threatened the woman with death if she did not show them what she had concealed. She presented them what was left of her child. Seeing them horrified and motionless, she addressed them thus: "You may well eat of it after me. It was my own child. It was I that killed it. You are not more delicate than a woman, nor more tender-hearted than a mother." They made their way out of the house shuddering.

Meanwhile, the famine cut off whole families: houses and streets were full of corpses. Not to be infected by them, they were thrown from the top of the wall down the precipices that surrounded the city. Titus, seeing the heaps of corpses, and struck by the smell that came forth from them, heaved a deep sigh, and, raising his hands to heaven, called God to witness that it was not his work. To put an end to so many miseries, he urged on the siege with greater activity. But there were new horrors to meet his eyes.

A number of Jews escaped from the city, and were endeavouring to pass the Romans. The soldiers of Titus suspected that these unfortunates had swallowed some gold in order to secure themselves from the searches of the factious. They accordingly ripped them open, and rummaged through their entrails. In one night two thousand were disembowelled. Titus, having been informed of it, declared that he would punish with death anyone convicted of such barbarity; but his orders were not regarded.

At length, after some furious battles, Titus gained possession of the fortress Antonia, and reached the temple on the 17th of July. The siege had begun on the 14th of April. In a little while he attacked the second enclosure of the temple, and set fire to the doors, commanding, however, that the body of the building should be spared. But, says the historian Josephus, from whom we quote in all this narrative, a Roman soldier, driven on by a divine inspiration, seized a brand, and, being helped up by his comrades,

threw it into one of the rooms connected with the temple. The fire spread immediately, burst into the heart of the temple, and consumed everything, in spite of all the efforts of Titus to extinguish it. Thus was accomplished the Saviour's prediction, that not a stone there should be left upon a stone. The second temple was burned on the 10th of August, the same day of the same month on which the first had been burned by Nabuchodonosor.

The Romans slaughtered all whom they met in Jerusalem, and Titus, having demolished whatever was left of the temple and city, passed the plough over their site. Eleven hundred thousand Jews perished in the siege. Ninety-seven thousand were sold, and dispersed, with what remained of the nation, over the whole extent of the empire. Titus refused the crowns that the neighbouring nations presented to him in honour of his victory. He said plainly that the success had not been his work, and that he had merely been the instrument of divine vengeance.[1]

In point of fact, can anyone fail to see that this frightful disaster was the just punishment of the fury of the Jews against the Messias? Other cities have had to endure the rigours of a siege or a famine; but no one has ever seen the inhabitants of a beleaguered city make war on one another so pitilessly—practising cruelties more atrocious than those which they experienced from their enemies outside. This example is a solitary one: it shall always be so. It was necessary to verify the prediction of Jesus Christ, and to render the punishment of Jerusalem proportionate to the crime of crucifying a God—a unique crime, without an example previously or afterwards.[2]

Titus, after his victory, embarked for Rome, where he had a triumph on account of Judea with Vespasian, his father, whom he soon succeeded. But he only reigned two years, dying in the year of Our Lord 81. His brother Domitian succeeded him. He it was that commanded the second general persecution of the Church: it was well worthy of him.

This portion of Nero, as Tertullian calls him,[3] distinguished himself by such infamous conduct that the very record of it makes us grow pale. He desired that he should receive the name of *God* in all the petitions addressed to him. Uniting folly with debauchery, he one day convoked the senate to decide in what vessel he should have a turbot cooked. Another day, having invited the chief senators to a feast, he had them led with much ceremony into a large hall draped in black and lighted by a few sepulchral lamps, which only enabled

[1] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, b. VII; Philost., *Apol.*, b. VI, c. xiv.
[2] *Hist. abrégée de l'Eglise*, p. 24. [3] *Apol.*, c. iv

them to see a number of coffins, bearing the names of the guests. Presently the hall was entered by a party of men, as black as the tapestry, who held a sword in one hand and a torch in the other. These furies, having for a while terrified the senators, at last opened the door for them. A fit chastisement of this famous nation, which, after conquering the world by its courage and the severity of its morals, became more corrupt, more effeminate, more relaxed than any of the peoples that it had subjugated: the sport of its tyrants, whom it idolised even to the moment that they crushed it beneath their feet!

Domitian used to remain whole days in his chamber, occupied in killing flies with a gold bodkin. A courtier was one day asked if the emperor was alone. So much alone, he replied, that there is not even a fly with him. Next day this courtier paid with his head for his harmless pleasantry.

As for the violence of the persecution that he raised against the Christians, we may judge of it by the manner in which he treated the most distinguished persons, and even his nearest relatives. He put to death the consul *Flavius Clemens*, his cousin-german, and banished *Domitilla*, the consul's wife, because they were Christians. He transported the consul's niece to the island of Pontia, where she remained for some time: she was afterwards burned alive at Terracina with two other martyrs. Two of the consul's slaves, Nereus and Achilleus, who had also been converted to the Faith, suffered various tortures, and were at length beheaded. A countless number of other persons were not only plundered of all their possessions, but also put to death. The most celebrated event in Domitian's persecution was the martyrdom of St. John the Evangelist: we have already related it.

So many cruelties against the holy Spouse of Jesus Christ could not be left unpunished. It was necessary that Domitian, like all other persecutors, should contribute to the glory of the Lamb. The hand of the Almighty fell heavy upon him. For a long time before his death, the monster, torn with remorse, was in a state of continual alarm: the fear of death never left him. His precautions to keep it off availed him nothing. He was murdered by one of his wife's freed-servants in the year of Our Lord 96. The senate denied him every kind of honour after his death, even that of burial.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having supported the courage of our ancestors amid the trials of persecution. Grant us the grace to imitate them, and to remember well that the good

and the bad must contribute equally, though differently, to the glory of Religion.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will pray for the enemies of the Church.*

LESSON XI.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES.)

Letter of St. Clement to the Church of Corinth. Third Persecution under Trajan: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. Judgment of God on Trajan. Fourth Persecution under Adrian: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Symphorosa and her Seven Sons.

My enemies have often from my youth renewed their attacks upon me: this is what the Church may in all truth say of herself. While Nero and Domitian caused her blood to flow, the devil endeavoured to raise the spirit of division among her own members. In the closing years of the first century, a dispute had arisen among the Faithful of Corinth; several parties had been formed: a schism was to be feared. To drive the wolf from the fold, the head of this Church, finding himself too weak, turned his looks towards the city of Rome, and addressed the Pastor of Pastors. Pope St. Clement made haste to assist this afflicted portion of his immense flock. Raised in the year 91 to the Chair of Peter, already consecrated several times with martyrs' blood, this new Pontiff died in the year of Our Lord 100, during the persecution of Trajan. He wrote to the Corinthians a letter truly worthy of the Common Father of Christians It breathes so much of the spirit of Our Lord that in the early ages it was read in the churches, like the Epistles of the Apostles and other parts of the Holy Scripture.

The Saint begins by drawing a picture of the manners of the first Christians, and especially of the Faithful of Corinth before the unfortunate division that is desolating their Church. "What strangers," he says, "coming in crowds among you, were not struck by your lively faith, adorned with all other virtues? Who did not admire your piety towards Jesus Christ, so full of meekness and wisdom? Who did not praise that splendid generosity with which you shone in the exercise of hospitality? You acted in all things without respect of persons, and you walked with rapid strides in the way of the Law of God, under the peaceful guidance of your Pastors. You rendered becoming honour to your elders. You gave to

young people an example of humility and modesty. You advised wives to be attached to their husbands, to bless their state of dependence in humility and simplicity of heart, to apply themselves to the care of their houses in retirement and with reserve, and to ennoble all their works by the purity and sanctity of their intentions. You were all humble and unpresuming: more inclined to obey than to command, to give than to receive: content with a subsistence in this world, which you regarded as a place of pilgrimage, and going straight to your true country, the Law of the Lord always before your eyes, and the ears of your hearts always open to His words. Thus did you enjoy the blessings of meekness and peace . . . You conversed in sincerity and innocence, without malice or resentment. If anyone sinned against you, it was his fall that you deplored: you looked upon the neighbour's faults as your own. The first germ of division, the very shadow of dissension, horrified you."

The holy Pontiff finds the cause of the change that has suddenly been wrought among them, in the crime of envy, whose disorders he exposes by examples taken from sacred history, coming down from the time of Abel and the Patriarchs to that of the Apostles, and even later.

The remedy for this evil is the imitation of our Divine Master: herein did our ancestors always find it. After this august model, St. Clement proposes another in inanimate creatures, which live peacefully under the orders of Providence, and he makes the material universe a great preacher of concord.

Here are his remarkable words: "The heavens, submissive to the laws of Divine Providence, quietly accomplish their mighty revolutions. Day and night follow the course prescribed for them, and never place an obstacle in each other's way. The sun, the moon, the starry choirs, journey in perfect harmony through the space marked out for them, without wandering from it for a single moment. The ever-fruitful earth furnishes abundantly, and at various seasons, all things necessary for men, and for all other creatures that breathe, without ever changing the laws that God has imposed on it. The sea, though raised against itself in swelling waves, never passes its bounds. The spring, the summer, the autumn, the winter, peacefully succeed one another. The winds, at the appointed times, send forth their angry breath unopposed. In fine, the very smallest animals live together in perfect union."

The holy Pontiff concludes that, imitating all nature, the only ambition of a Christian ought to be to please God, and to live in peace with his fellow-men. As soon as his letter, so full of the apostolic spirit, and so worthy of the Common Father, reached

Corinth and was read to the Faithful, abundant tears of repentance flowed from all eyes. They embraced one another. Charity recovered its sway. Order was restored. Such were our ancestors: if they committed faults because they were men, they knew how to acknowledge them and to humble themselves on account of them because they were Christians.

Internal peace became more necessary for the Church on the approach of the conflict which, now for the third time, would expose the Saviour's sheep to the furious wolves of Paganism. Trajan was the author of the third persecution. His manners entitled him to write his name after those of Nero and Domitian. This emperor ascended the throne of the world in the year of Our Lord 98, and extended by his victories the bounds of the Roman Empire. A skilful warrior and an able politician, he was far from being as estimable in his private character. Given over to vice and debauchery, he used often to be found after dinner in a state unfit for any rational act. It is asserted with much reason that it was this relish for disorder and gross enjoyments, to which he shamelessly abandoned himself, that made the Christians hateful to him, their pure and chaste lives being too loud a condemnation of his wicked life. He caused them to be put to death throughout the whole extent of the Empire.[1] The slaughter began about the year 106 or 107. In this persecution perished St. Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem. After confessing Jesus Christ with admirable constancy, he was condemned to the tortures of the cross, and died like his Divine Master.

But the most illustrious victim of the hatred that Trajan bore the Christian name was St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch and disciple of St. John. Let us recollect ourselves to hear the interesting history of his martydom, and let us beg of God to kindle in our hearts some sparks of that wondrous charity which consumed Ignatius. A circumstance, related by the authors of his acts, explains the tender love of the venerable Pontiff for Our Lord. He was yet a mere child, they say, when Christ, conversing among men, laid His venerable hands upon him, and said to the people, *Whosoever will not humble himself as this little child, shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Ignatius had ruled the Church of Antioch for forty years, when he was called to martyrdom. In the year 106 of Jesus Christ, Trajan, bent on turning his arms against the Parthians, set out eastward. He came to Antioch the year following, and entered it on the 17th of January with great pomp. His first care, after his

[1] See Eusebius, b. III, c. xxxiii.

arrival in the city, was to provide for the glory of his gods, and he required under pain of death that everyone should adore them.

Ignatius, who was fearful only for his flock, generously permitted himself to be led before the emperor, who said to him, Is it thou then, wicked demon, that dost transgress my commands, and induce others to perish miserably? Ignatius answered, Thou art the only only one, O prince, that hath ever called Theophorus by the insulting name which thou hast just given him. So far are the servants of God from being evil demons, know that the demons tremble before them!

Trajan. Who is this Theophorus?

Ignatius. I am he, and whosoever carrieth Jesus Christ, as I do, in his heart.[1]

Trajan. Doth it seem to thee, then, that we have not also in our hearts the gods, who assist us to overcome our enemies?

Ignatius. The gods! You deceive yourselves: they are only devils. There is but one God, who made heaven and earth, and one Jesus Christ, His only Son: and it is this Great King whose favour alone can render you happy.

Trajan. Whom didst thou name there? Doubtless, that Jesus whom Pilate fastened to a cross?

Ignatius. Say rather that Jesus that did Himself fasten to His cross both sin and its author, and that He subjects them to all those who bear Him in their heart.

Trajan. Dost thou then bear Christ within thee?

Ignatius. Yes, for it is written, *I will dwell and rest in them.*[2]

Trajan, provoked by the firmness with which the holy Bishop had professed His law, pronounced against him the following sentence: We command that Ignatius, who glories in bearing within him the Crucified, be put in irons and safely conducted to great Rome, there to be exposed to wild beasts for the entertainment of the people.

The Saint, having heard the decree of his death, exclaimed in a transport of joy: I return Thee thanks, O Lord, for having given me a perfect love towards Thee, and for letting me be bound in glorious chains, like the great Paul, Thy Apostle! As he ended these words, he put on the chains himself. He then prayed for his Church and recommended it with tears to God. He was next handed over to a band of rude, pitiless soldiers, who should take him to Rome, there to become the food of lions and the sport of the people.

What a sight! A Bishop, a venerable old man, a Saint, laden

[1] *Theophorus* in Greek means *One who carries God.* [2] 2 *Cor.*, vi.

with chains, and beginning a journey of eighteen hundred miles, at the end of which appeared a blood-drenched amphitheatre, with lions and leopards awaiting their prey, and a whole people impatient to clap their hands over the death of a victim. The East and the West had their eyes fixed on Ignatius. The old and the young society were in expectation; the one yelled with joy, the other prayed with tears; each looked forward to a glorious victory. We shall soon see which of them triumphed.

Ignatius set out from Antioch for Seleucia, where he was put on board a vessel that should coast along by Asia Minor and bring him direct to Rome. However, another route was chosen, which greatly lengthened the voyage. The cause is not well known: perhaps it was to show the Saint in a greater number of places, in order to terrify the Christians and such as were thinking of becoming Christians. Be this as it may, the long voyage was permitted by Providence that the sight of Ignatius might console and edify many Churches. Already, in this respect, Paganism was conquered.

The Saint was accompanied from Syria to Rome by Philo, a deacon, and Agathopodus, who are supposed to have been the authors of the acts of his martyrdom. There were other Christians from Antioch, besides, who preceded him on the way, and were expecting him at Rome. Ignatius was guarded day and night, on land as well as on sea, by ten soldiers, whom he calls *leopards*, on account of their inhumanity, and because his meekness and patience only irritated them more and more.

Though the Saint was closely watched by his guards, yet he had liberty enough to confirm in the Faith those Churches which he met along his course. The Faithful of the places through which he passed ran in crowds to see him, and to render him all the services possible. The Churches of Asia, not satisfied with deputing Bishops and Priests to visit him, as a mark of honour, also charged several of the Faithful to accompany him on the rest of the journey: on which account the Saint remarks that he had several Churches with him. Hence, the way of his martyrdom was a triumphal march: another defeat for Paganism!

After a long and dangerous voyage, the Saint reached Smyrna. He profited of the liberty granted him to leave the ship, that he might salute St. Polycarp, who was Bishop of this city, and, like himself, a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. After communicating together in the union of truly episcopal charity, Ignatius, showing his glorious chains to St. Polycarp, besought him not to place any obstacle to his death. He made the same request to the Churches of Asia, whose deputies he met at Smyrna: they were the Bishops of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles.

Ignatius wrote from Smyrna four letters, which breathe a most tender and apostolic spirit. The first is addressed to the Church of Ephesus; the second, to the Church of Magnesia; the third, to the Church of Tralles; and the fourth, to the Church of Rome. The object of the last was this. Knowing all the power of prayer with God, the Saint feared lest his release should be asked and obtained from Heaven. He therefore wrote to the Romans, beseeching them not to deprive him thus of the crown of martyrdom. This letter is probably unique of its kind. Let us again recollect ourselves, to hear it read, and let us be penetrated with the burning charity of which it is an expression.

"Ignatius, surnamed Theophorus, to the favourite Church of God; to the holy Church of Rome, so worthy of serving the Most High; to that Church which deserves to be praised and respected, in which all things are regulated by prudence, in which charity reigns, in which chastity triumphs; to the illustrious Faithful united according to the spirit and the flesh—full of that grace which, binding them to one another by sacred ties, separates them from all profane society: health in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, and the plenitude of the Father in Jesus Christ Our Lord, our God.

"God listening to my prayers, I have at length obtained from His goodness an opportunity of enjoying your sweet company; for, though chained, I hope in a little while to be near you. But I am afraid of your charity. Nothing is easier for you than to prevent my death: by setting yourselves in opposition to it, you stand in the way of my happiness . . . Never shall I have a more admirable opportunity of being united to God, nor you of performing a good work: you have only to be quiet. If you do not mention me, I shall go to my God; but if you let yourselves be touched with a false pity for this wretched flesh, you will send me back to a career of labour and difficulty. Allow me to be immolated, while the altar is still ready. All that I ask of you is that, during the sacrifice, you should sing with united voices canticles in honour of the Father and of Jesus Christ His Son. Return thanks to God for permitting a Bishop of Syria to be brought from the East to the West, there to lose his life—what do I say?—there to be born again to his God.

"You never envy any person: why would you envy me? You can always teach firmness and constancy: would you now change your maxims? Rather obtain for me by your prayers the courage that I need to resist attacks within and without: it is a small matter to appear a Christian, if one is not so in reality. Fine words and showy appearances do not make a Christian, but solid virtue, and greatness of soul in the midst of trials.

"I write to the Churches that I go to death joyfully, provided you do not oppose it. I beseech you again not to yield to a false pity for me. Let me become the food of beasts. It is the shortest way to Heaven. I am the wheat of God: I must be ground by the teeth of beasts to become a bread worthy of being offered to Jesus Christ. Encourage the beasts rather, that they may make themselves my grave, lest after my death I should become a burden to anyone . . .

"On reaching Rome, I hope to find the beasts ready to devour me . . . Pardon me these sentiments: I know what is advantageous for me. I now begin to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Nothing affects me, everything is a matter of indifference to me, through the hope that I have of possessing Jesus Christ. Let fire reduce me to ashes; let a cross give me a slow and cruel death; let raging tigers and hungry lions be set loose on me; let my bones be scattered on all sides; let the devils exhaust their rage on me: I will suffer all with joy, provided I thereby arrive at the possession of Jesus Christ.

"My love is nailed to the cross: the fire that burns me is a pure and divine fire. It is a living fire, which continually says to me in the depth of my heart, Ignatius, come to thy Father! I have no taste for the most dainty meats or the most exquisite wines. The bread for which I hunger is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of David; and the wine for which I thirst is His blood, the source of immortal charity. I am no longer attached to the earth. I no longer regard myself as living among men. May Jesus Christ enable you to perceive the truth of what I write to you: it is His Father Himself who guides my pen. Obtain for me the crown of victory. If I suffer, I shall think myself loved by you; but if I be rejected, I shall think myself hated by you.

"Remember in your prayers the Church of Syria, which has God for its pastor in my stead. May Jesus Christ undertake its guidance during my absence! I confide it to His providence and to your charity. As for me, I am ashamed to be reckoned among His members: I am not worthy of it, being the last of all. I salute you in spirit, as well as all the Churches that have met me on my way with a charity wholly Christian.

"I write to you from Smyrna by the Faithful of Ephesus. Regarding those who have left Syria for Rome with a view to the glory of God, I think you know them: tell them that I am near. They are all worthy of God and of you. Your charity will render them the good offices which their virtue deserves.

"Smyrna, 23rd August. God's to the end in the patience of Jesus Christ!"

After writing this letter, Ignatius set out from Smyrna, yielding to the cruel impatience of the soldiers who led him, and who continually urged him on, in order to reach Rome before the day fixed for the public sports. The anchor being dropped at Troas, he learned there that God had restored peace to the Church of Antioch: this news calmed his uneasiness. From Troas he wrote to the Churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna, and to St. Polycarp. The same spirit of charity is found in these three letters as in the former ones.

He would have liked very much to write to the other Churches of Asia; but his guards would not give him time. He begged St. Polycarp to do it for him. From Troas he sailed to Neapolis in Macedonia, and thence to Philippi. He had to cross Macedonia and Epirus on foot. At Epidaurus in Dalmatia he re-embarked, and, passing Rhegium, came within sight of Puteoli. On beholding this city, where St. Paul had landed, he asked that it might be permitted him to go on shore, for the purpose of walking in the footsteps of the Great Apostle. But a sharp breeze drove the vessel out to sea, and the Saint was obliged to content himself with praising highly the charity of the Faithful in this city.

"At length, the wind declaring in our favour," say the authors of his acts, "we were carried in twenty-four hours to the mouth of the Tiber, which is the port of the Romans. We were filled with sorrow on considering that we should soon be separated from our dear master. He, on the contrary, rejoiced to be approaching the end of his course.

"Scarcely had we landed, when the soldiers began to hurry us along the road to Rome, because the festivities were drawing to a close. The rumour having gone out that Ignatius was on the point of arriving, the brethren of Rome came forth to meet him. Their souls were penetrated with grief; but they also felt a degree of joy on seeing in the midst of them the great man whom they had been chosen to accompany. Some of the most fervent began to say to one another that they should try to appease the people, and to dissuade them from thirsting for his blood. But the Spirit of God having acquainted the holy Bishop with the design formed against him, he paused. Then, saluting those who surrounded him, and asking and giving peace, he besought them, even with more energy than he had done in his letter, not to stand in the way of his happiness. They yielded to his wishes. Immediately we all went down upon our knees, and the Saint, raising his voice, implored the Son of God to have pity on the Church, to put an end to persecution, and to preserve charity among the Faithful.

"This prayer being ended, he was carried off precipitately by the guards, and led to the amphitheatre, as the shows were just

about to conclude. It was the 20th of December, one of those solemn days which Roman superstition had consecrated under the name of *sigillaria*."

All Rome had rushed to the theatre. The prefect having read the letter that the soldiers brought him on the part of the emperor, the Saint was placed in the arena. No sooner did the venerable old man hear the lions roaring than he exclaimed, "I am the wheat of the Lord; I must be ground by the teeth of wild beasts to become the bread of Jesus Christ." Immediately two lions sprang upon him, tore him to pieces, and devoured him: nothing was left of him but the largest and hardest of his bones. Thus was heard the prayer that he had made to God.

Old Rome drank eagerly the martyr's blood, and, shortly afterwards leaving the seats of the amphitheatre, wandered away to places of debauchery.

"As for us," continue the companions of Ignatius, "at this sad sight we were plunged into tears. We spent the whole night, watching and weeping, beseeching the Lord to console us for this death, by giving us some certain pledge of the glory that had followed it. The Lord heard us. Several of us, being asleep, saw Ignatius in ineffable glory. We have given a faithful record of all that occurred at his martyrdom. We have noted its place, its day, and its circumstances, in order that every year we may be able to meet to sing the victory of Jesus Christ, who fought the devil and triumphed over him by His illustrious and generous champion.

"We gathered up respectfully the Saint's bones, which were borne off in triumph to Antioch and kept as a priceless treasure. Thus, all the cities that lie between Rome and Antioch received twice the blessing of Ignatius; for, when going, they ran to meet him, and, on our return, they crowded round his precious relics like swarms of bees round a hive."[1]

Later on, the relics of St. Ignatius were brought back to Rome, and placed in the venerable basilica of St. Clement, a few steps from the Coliseum, where they still rest.

Meanwhile, the arm of God weighed heavily on the persecutor of the Christian name. Trajan, worn out before his time, more by profligacy than by labour, died miserably at Selinonta, about the beginning of August, in the year of Our Lord 117. His history was written by a great many authors, and is all lost, except a few stray fragments. It would seem that Providence determined to bury the actions of Trajan in proportion to his immoderate desire of making a show in the world.

[1] *Biblioth. select. Patr.* t. II.

Paganism, vanquished in Trajan's persecution, soon rose again to its feet more furious. Adrian wished to imitate his predecessor in hatred of Christianity, as he imitated him in vice. It is truly a great honour for Religion not to have had and not to have any enemies but men degraded by the most shameful passions. We ought to be proud of this; for what greater proof can there be of its holiness or its truth?

To that cruel-heartedness which seemed natural to him,[1] Adrian joined a mind excessively superstitious He took charge of all the sacrifices that were offered in Rome. He himself assumed the office of sovereign pontiff, and was the sacrificator of the temple of Eleusina. Having spent a winter at Athens and been initiated in all the mysteries of Greece, he permitted the pagans to persecute the Christians, and this persecution, according to St. Jerome, was a most sanguinary one.[2]

Among the first and most illustrious victims we must count St. Eustachius and his wife Theophista, with their children, burned alive in a brazen bull. Next comes St. Symphorosa. In the year 121, two years after his ascending the throne, Adrian built near Tibur, now called Tivoli, a magnificent palace, whose dedication he wished to be celebrated with all the pomp observed by the pagans on such occasions. He offered sacrifices, and consulted his gods regarding the duration of this superb edifice. Instead of the flattering answer that he expected, he received the following: "O prince! we cannot satisfy your curiosity, unless you put an end to the insults that a Christian widow heaps on us, by invoking her God in our presence. She is called Symphorosa, and is the mother of seven sons. Make her offer us incense, and we will answer your questions."

Symphorosa lived at Tibur with her seven sons, and employed her income, which was considerable, in relieving the poor, especially those Christians who were suffering for the Faith. Adrian commanded that the holy widow and her seven sons should be arrested and brought before him. Hiding his indignation under an apparent composure, he at first tried soft words, in order to induce her to sacrifice to the gods. Symphorosa, animated by the Spirit of God, answered him for herself and her children: Prince! my husband and brother-in-law were officers in your army;[3] both had the honour of commanding your soldiers. They were tribunes. They gave their lives for Jesus Christ, preferring to endure a thousand torments

[1] See Spartian., ii.

[2] *In Catalog.*—Orosius, Mamachi, and Baronius rank him in the number of the ten great persecutors of the Church.

[3] Getulius and Amatius.

rather than burn one grain of incense before the idols that you adore. They died after vanquishing the demons. But they now live in Heaven, crowned with glory and honour.

The emperor, changing colour, said to her, angrily: Sacrifice immediately, or I will sacrifice you and your seven sons to our all-powerful gods.

Symphorosa. Whence is this happiness unto me, to be sacrificed eight times to my God?

Adrian. I tell you again that I will sacrifice you to our gods.

Symphorosa. Your gods cannot receive me in sacrifice. I am not a victim for them. But if you command me to be burned for the name of Jesus Christ, my death will increase the torments that your demons suffer in flames.

Adrian. Choose: sacrifice or die.

Symphorosa. You think, doubtless, to terrify me. No, your threats will not make me change. I shall never meet my husband again sooner than when you have put me to death for the name of Jesus Christ. Why do you wait? I am ready to die: I adore the same God.

The tyrant commanded Symphorosa to be led to the temple of Hercules, to be struck on the face again and again, and to be hung up by the hair. As she remained steadfast amid her tortures, he caused her to be thrown into the river,[1] with a large stone round her neck. It was necessary that this Tibur and this Teverone, the witnesses of so many shameful scenes, should be purified by the anguish and the blood of our martyrs. Her brother, Eugenius, who was one of the chief men of the council of Tibur, drew up her body, and buried it on the road near the town.

Next day, Adrian commanded the seven sons of Symphorosa to be brought forth together. The new Antiochus tried exhortations, promises, and threats, one after another. Seeing that it was all useless, he gave orders that seven stakes should be fixed round the temple of Hercules, and that the youths should be stretched on them with pulleys. The cruel emperor took delight in varying their torments. Crescens, the eldest of all, had his throat cut; the second, named Julian, was stabbed in the breast; the third, Nemesius, had his heart pierced with a lance; the fourth, Primitivus, was struck on the stomach; the fifth, Justin, was torn in the back; the sixth, Stacteus, had his sides opened; the youngest, Eugenius, was cleft asunder from the head downwards.

The day after the death of these happy brothers, Adrian went to the temple of Hercules, and ordered a deep trench to be dug, and

[1] The Teverone.

all the bodies of the martyrs to be thrown into it. Their blood quenched the fire of persecution, which did not rekindle for eighteen months afterwards. The Christians employed this time of peace in rendering to the relics of the holy martyrs that honour which was due to them. Tombs were raised for them in various parts of the world. Their names were engraved on these monuments; but they are written in the Book of Life with characters of light, which time shall never efface.'

Such was the life of our ancestors in those days at once so sad and so beautiful: to struggle, to bury their dead, and to pray together at the tombs of their dead, in order to prepare themselves for new struggles. After a truce of eighteen months, the warfare began again, and ended only a short time before Adrian's death. In this new persecution perished St. Hermes, Prefect of Rome, and Pope St. Alexander.

The time having come when truth, previously defended by the blood and the courageous answers of martyrs, should be publicly vindicated, God raised up a number of eloquent apologists. Quadratus and Aristides were the first to lay at the foot of the throne the justification of Christians. Quadratus was Bishop of Athens. He himself presented his apology to the Emperor Adrian: this precious document is lost. Aristides also belonged to Athens, where he practised the profession of a philosopher. Converted to Christianity, he desired to extend its conquests by his writings. He presented his apology to the emperor. Adrian let himself be persuaded by the eloquence of these two advocates of Christianity, and put a stop to the persecution.

Nevertheless, this emperor, covered with the blood of Christians, should serve for the glory of Jesus Christ, by becoming a monument of His justice. To the crimes of the past, he added new outrages against Heaven: he ventured to raise a trophy of his infamous debaucheries, by building a city that should keep his memory alive. On the very place where Our Lord had risen from the dead, he placed a statue of Jupiter, and on Calvary, one of Venus. At Bethlehem he planted a grove in honour of a deity no less infamous, and consecrated to the same the grotto in which the Saviour had been born. So many sacrileges filled up the measure of his iniquities.

A prey to deep melancholy, Adrian became more cruel than ever, and, towards the close of his reign, put many distinguished persons to death without the least cause. Attacked by a dropsy in the very palace of Tibur that had witnessed the condemnation of St. Symphorosa and her children, he fell into despair. Often did he

' Dom Ruinart, t. I. p. 126.

ask for poison or a sword to take away his life. He even offered money and promised security to those who would render him this service. But no one would accept his proposals. Day and night the tyrant lamented that he could not find death—he who had brought it on so many others. At length he succeeded in putting an end to himself, in the year of Our Lord 138.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the glorious victories that Thou didst win, in the persons of St. Ignatius and St. Symphorosa, over the devil. Grant us a share in that charity, stronger than death, which consumed their souls.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will strive to live as if I were all alone in the world with God.*

LESSON XII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (SECOND CENTURY, *continued.*)

Fifth Persecution, under Antoninus: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Felicitas, a Roman Lady, and her Seven Sons. Apology of St. Justin. Judgment of God on the Romans. Sixth Persecution, under Marcus Aurelius: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Justin and St. Polycarp.

THE bloody sword of persecution, returned to the scabbard in the latter years of Adrian, was soon drawn out again by Antoninus, his successor. The Senate, enchanted with the behaviour of the new emperor in the beginning of his reign, decreed to him the title of *Pious*. His merely human virtues may have deserved the praise of pagans, but his dissolute habits could not fail to make him a persecutor of the Christian Religion. Not only did he endure with the utmost unconcern the reckless profligacy of his wife, Faustina, but he wished in a manner to immortalise it. After the death of this shameless princess, he had divine honours decreed to her, and a temple that still exists consecrated to her. Abandoned himself to the most scandalous disorders, he was the slave of the vilest wretches, who possessed such an influence over his mind that they disposed at their pleasure of the honours and offices of the empire, often in favour of those most unworthy of them.[1] Add that this prince was

[1] See Jul. Capitol

so devoted to his idols that he used to be continually offering them sacrifices—which he always did personally, unless when sick.

At the same time, history does not say that Antoninus issued any new edicts against the Christians. A weak and sensual prince, he allowed them to be sacrificed in his name by virtue of previous edicts. The fury of the pagans was such that the deepest and darkest caves could not afford a secure retreat for our ancestors, and it was held a crime to perform any of those duties which nature or friendship suggested towards the victims of persecution.[1]

Among the martyrs who then sealed their Faith with their blood, we must count an illustrious Roman lady, named Felicitas, as eminent for her virtues as for her birth. This lady had seven sons, whom she brought up in the fear of God and in the practice of all Christian virtues. After her husband's death, she served God in continence, occupied only with good works. Her example, and that of her family, drew many pagans from their superstitions.

The priests of the false gods, enraged at the losses inflicted on their religion, made a complaint to the emperor. "O prince!" they said, "we consider it our duty to warn you that there is in Rome a widow belonging to that detestable sect which never ceases to insult our gods, and to provoke them against you and the empire. She is aided in her impiety by her children. She has seven sons, who, Christians like their mother, make sacrilegious vows like her, and who will assuredly draw down the anger of our gods upon us if you do not take care to appease them, by obliging this undutiful family to offer them that worship which is their due."

Antoninus, who was exceedingly superstitious himself, lent a favourable ear to the complaint of the priests. He sent for Publius, the prefect of Rome, and directed him by every means possible to induce Felicitas and her children to sacrifice to the gods. This was in the year of our Lord 150. The prefect obeyed the emperor's commands. First trying gentleness, he respectfully invited the lady to come to his house. Felicitas did so, accompanied by her seven sons. Let us follow into the presence of the judge this mother who was so worthy of being a mother, and let the noble conduct of herself and her children serve us as a model. Publius took Felicitas aside, and employed all his ingenuity to make her sacrifice, adding that, in case of refusal, he should be obliged to have recourse to severe measures.

"Do not imagine, Publius," answered the Saint, with as much confidence as modesty, "that Felicitas ever forgets what is due to her God. I am no more terrified by your threats than softened by

[1] Mamachi, t. II, p. 258; *Roma Subterr.*, l. III, c. xxii; and our *Histoire des Catacombes: Catacomb. de St. Calixte*

your flatteries. I bear in my bosom the Almighty God. I feel that He strengthens me, and that He will not permit His servant to be overcome, since she fights only for His glory." "Miserable woman," replied the prefect, "if death has so many charms for you, go and die; but what madness induces you to deprive your children of that life which you gave them?" "My children," answered Felicitas, "will live eternally in Jesus Christ, if they be faithful to Him; but they must expect torments that will never end, if they sacrifice to idols."

Next day, Publius, being seated on his tribunal in the Campus Martius, sent for Felicitas and her sons. Then, addressing the mother, he said to her, "Have pity on your children, who are in the bloom of youth, and who may aspire to the first offices of the empire." "Your pity," answered the Saint, "is truly impious, and the compassion to which you exhort me would tend to make me the most cruel of mothers." Then, turning towards her children, she said to them, "Do you see that sky so beautiful and so high? It is up there that Jesus Christ is waiting to crown you. Persevere in His love, and fight valiantly for the salvation of your souls."

At these words, Publius ordered her to be struck on the face, and cried out in a dreadful voice, "How dare you in my very presence inspire them with such sentiments, and encourage them to despise the commands of our emperors?"

Yet he resolved to make one trial more, by applying to the holy martyrs separately the combined force of his promises and his threats. He began with Januarius, the eldest of the seven brothers, but only received from him this answer: "What you advise me to do is contrary to reason, and I hope that the goodness of the Lord Jesus will preserve me from such impiety." The prefect ordered him to be cruelly scourged, after which he sent him back to prison. Felix was next called. Urged to sacrifice, he replied, "We sacrifice only to one God. Never will we forget the love that we owe to Jesus Christ. Employ all the inventions and artifices of your cruelty—you cannot rob us of our Faith."

After him, Philip entered the lists. Publius said to him, "Our invincible emperor commands you to sacrifice to the omnipotent gods." "They to whom you want me to sacrifice," answered Philip, "are not omnipotent gods: they are only vain idols that serve as a retreat for devils." Philip was removed from the sight of the prefect, who quivered with rage, and Sylvanus took his place. Publius said to him, "From what I see, I can judge that you are all acting in concert with the most wicked of women. An unnatural mother poisons your minds with her counsels: she inspires you with rebellion and impiety. Fear lest you fall under the condemnation

that awaits you." Sylvanus answered, "If we were so weak as to let ourselves be moved by the fear of a death that lasts only for a moment, we should become the prey of a death that shall never end. Whosoever despises your idols to serve the true God alone, shall live for ever with Him; but the abominable worship of idols shall plunge you into eternal flames, along with your gods."

The prefect, sick of so wise a lesson, sent away the young martyr. Alexander appeared. "Young man," said Publius to him, "your fate is in your own hands. Have pity on yourself. Save a life that is only yet at its beginning. Sacrifice: and gain the protection of the gods and the favour of Cæsar." "I serve a Master more powerful than Cæsar," replied Alexander; "I serve Jesus Christ. I confess Him with my mouth, and carry Him in my heart. I continually adore Him. My age, which appears to you so tender, will have all the virtues if I remain faithful to my God; but as for your gods, may they perish with all those who adore them!" Vitalis having been brought forth, Publius said to him, "As for you, my son, you did not come here foolishly, like your brothers, to look for death. You have too clear a mind not to prefer a happy life to an infamous death." Vitalis answered him, "It is true, Publius, that I love life; and to enjoy it the longer, I adore but one God, and hold the devil in horror."

At length Publius, having called the last of the brothers, whose name was Martialis, said to him, "I pity your unfortunate brothers. Will you follow their example, and despise the commands of our princes?" "Ah, Publius," answered Martialis, "you yourself know what dreadful torments are prepared in hell for those who adore devils. Either acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only God whom the whole world ought to adore, or tremble at the thought of the eternal punishments that await you."

The interrogation ended, all the holy martyrs were whipped, and again consigned to prison. Publius, despairing of a victory over their constancy, sent a full account of the proceedings to the emperor.

Antoninus, having read it, gave orders that the confessors should be sent to different judges, and condemned to different tortures. Januarius was beaten to death with whips loaded with plummets of lead. Felix and Philip were killed with clubs. Sylvanus was thrown headlong down a precipice. Alexander, Vitalis, and Martialis, the three youngest, were beheaded: Felicitas died in the same manner four months afterwards. All these admirable martyrs of Jesus Christ went by different ways to the general meeting-place, where the Sovereign Judge awaited them, holding in His hands the reward of their invincible constancy.[1]

[1] Dom Ruinart. l. I. (See also S. Greg., *in Cyclum Paschal.*)

Meanwhile, the Lord, who always keeps watch over His Church, was preparing a defender. The calumnies of the Pagans and the Jews served as a pretext for persecution: it was necessary to refute them, and to vindicate the conduct of the Christians. A strong, fearless voice was heard: it was that of St. Justin.

Born at Sichem, the ancient capital of Samaria, and brought up in heathenism, Justin had from an early age sought an acquaintance with the various sects of philosophy. He addressed himself in turn to the Stoics, the Pythagoreans, and the Academicians; but he was far from obtaining thereby that light which he desired. At length, as he was one day walking by the seaside, he perceived, on turning round, an old man following him close at hand. Justin was struck with his majestic appearance, as well as with a certain blending of gentleness and gravity in his manner. A conversation ensuing, its subject was soon the excellence of philosophy. The old man convinced Justin that the most renowned philosophers of paganism had been deceived, that they had not understood the nature either of the Deity or of the human soul. "To whom, then, must I have recourse," asked Justin, "that I may know the truth?" The old man named the Prophets for him, and told him their works. "As for you," he said, in conclusion, "pray earnestly that the gates of life may be opened for you. The things of which I have just spoken to you are such that they cannot be understood, except with the assistance of God and Jesus Christ." After these words the old man retired, and Justin saw him no more.

This interview made a deep impression on the mind of the young philosopher, and inspired him with a great esteem for the Prophets. "From that moment," he says himself, "I began to be truly philosophical.' I studied the motives of credibility presented by Christianity; and what most of all promoted my conversion was a secret admiration with which the invincible courage of the Christians in the midst of their torments filled me. I did not know with how many crimes they had been laden by the hatred of the public. But, on seeing them meet death, even in its most terrible forms, I was obliged to admit that such men could not possibly be guilty of the abominations charged against them. For how could a person desirous of pleasure receive joyfully a death that would at once deprive him of everything pleasant in the world?"[1]

A short time after his conversion, which took place about the thirtieth year of his age, Justin left the East for Rome. His first work was his *Discourse to the Greeks*. The Saint proposed to himself to convince the pagans of the justice of the reasons that had

[1] *Dial. cum Tryph.*, p. 225. [2] *Apol.*, i p 60.

induced him to embrace Christianity. He next published his *Exhortation to the Greeks.* We find herein a refutation of the errors of idolatry, with proofs of the vanity of pagan philosophers.

Soon afterwards appeared his celebrated *Epistle to Diognetus.* This Diognetus, a man of eminence, was well versed in philosophy. He had been tutor to Marcus Aurelius, who always treated him with much esteem and confidence. Struck by the behaviour of the Christians, he desired to know what it was that led them to despise, not only the world, but the most painful death, and whence came that mutual charity unknown among other men—a charity so powerful that it seemed to render them insensible to the most cruel wrongs. St. Justin took upon himself to give him the information sought. After demonstrating to him the folly of paganism and the imperfection of the Jewish Law, he pictures the virtues practised by the Christians, especially their humility, their meekness, and their love for those who hate them. He adds that tortures serve only to increase the number and to perfect the sanctity of the Faithful. Then follows a clear and precise explanation of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Creator of all things.

St. Justin remained a long time in Rome. He applied himself to the instruction of those who came to his house, either to consult him or to assist at the exercises of Christianity. Having left Rome, he went to Ephesus, and there met Tryphon. This Tryphon was a clever philosopher and the most famous Jew of his time. Justin had a regular controversy with him, which lasted two whole days: it took place in the presence of many persons. The Saint put an account of it in writing, and published it under the title of a *Dialogue with Tryphon.* This dialogue proves the insufficiency of the Law of Moses, as well as the divinity of Christianity.

But nothing has contributed more to the fame of St. Justin than the two Apologies that he wrote in favour of the Christian Religion. The first and more important was addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and his two adopted sons, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Never had the Christians been more eloquently defended against the numberless calumnies with which Jews and Pagans strove to blacken them. This first Apology produced its effect. Antoninus sent a rescript to Asia, forbidding the Christians to be disturbed.[1]

[1] Euseb., *Hist.*, l. IV, c. lxxiii.—Differing from Eusebius and Baronius, Pagi asserts that it was to Marcus Aurelius, after becoming emperor, that St. Justin presented his Apology. The rescript of Antoninus, in favour of the Christians, would have been obtained by the apology of Meliton. (See Bar., *cum notis Pagi*, t. II, an. 154, n. 4.)

Numberless calamities overwhelmed the empire under the reign of this prince, in order to avenge innocent blood. It was really provinces, rather than the emperor himself, that had drawn the sword against the Church. This is the reason why the provinces were struck, while the divine vengeance did not shine forth in an exemplary manner on the person of the emperor.

Antoninus having died in the year 163 after Jesus Christ, the persecution was rekindled under Marcus Aurelius, his son-in-law and successor. The whole history of Marcus Aurelius shows him to have been a haughty, selfish, corrupt character: the errors of his mind were equalled by those of his heart. He was an enemy of the Christians from motives of superstition and philosophy. He made himself remarkable by increasing the number of sacrifices, and by introducing religions that had previously been unknown among the Romans. He made repeated attempts in the senate to obtain divine honours for Adrian, whose vices had left an infamous stain on his memory. He carried his impiety and audacity still further, by placing in the number of the goddesses the wretched Faustina, by building a temple to her, and by obliging newly married persons to go and offer sacrifice to her.[2] At the death of Lucius Verus, his colleague, whose name was held in horror by all good people, he compelled the senate to honour him as a god. So true it is that outside Christianity the most beautiful virtues are only deceitful appearances!

The barbarians having furiously ravaged the provinces, the impious Marcus Aurelius avenged himself on the Christians, who were innocent. It was the systematic course among the pagans to make our virtuous ancestors responsible for all public and private calamities. "Let the Tiber overflow its banks," said Tertullian to them, "let the Nile refuse to flood the plains, let the heavens give no rain, let an earthquake, pestilence, or famine occur somewhere,

[1] It is a mistake to say that Marcus Aurelius did not issue any edict of persecution against the Christians. In the acts of St. Symphorian, which all sound critics place under the reign of this emperor, the judge directs the following decree to be read: "The Emperor Aurelius to all his administrators and officers. We have learned that those who in our days are called Christians violate the ordinances of the laws. Arrest them; and, if they do not sacrifice to our gods, punish them with various tortures: in such a manner, however, that justice may be mingled with severity, and that the punishment may cease when the crime ceases." (*Act.* S. Symphor.; D. Ruinart, 22 Aug.)

[2] Faustina, the daughter of Antoninus, even surpassed her mother in dissoluteness and intemperance. Marcus Aurelius was often urged to repudiate her. "That is all very well," would this highly lauded philosopher reply; "but if we dismiss the wife, we must also restore the dowry." And this dowry was the Empire!—Si uxorem dimittimus reddamus et dotem. (Jul. Capit., n. 19.)

what do you do? You run to the baths, you do not forsake places of debauchery, you sacrifice to Jupiter, you appoint superstitious ceremonies for the people, you consult Heaven at the Capitol, and you expect that rain will fall from the roofs of your temples, without your thinking of God or addressing petitions to Him. As for us, worn out with fasts and austerities, purified by continence, renouncing all the enjoyments of life, we array ourselves in sackcloth and ashes, and, disarming Heaven, extort its clemency. And, when we have obtained mercy, Jupiter is thanked! It is you, therefore, who are a burden to the earth—you who, despising the true God, are the guilty cause of the evils that weigh upon the empire; and yet, by an unexampled injustice, on the arrival of any fresh calamity, you everywhere cry out, 'The Christians to the Lion!' What! to prefer one lion to a whole people of Christians!"[1]

St. Justin, seeing the fire of persecution rekindle more fiercely than ever, wrote a second Apology. He addressed it to Marcus Aurelius and the Roman senate. "I fully expect," he said, "that it will cost me my life." He was not mistaken. Having been arrested with some other Christians, he was brought before Rusticus, the prefect of Rome, who said to him, Obey the gods, by conforming to the emperor's edicts.

Justin. Whoever obeys Jesus Christ, our Saviour, cannot be condemned.

Rusticus. To what kind of knowledge do you apply yourself?

Justin. I tried all kinds of knowledge; but, not being able to find out the truth, I at length attached myself to the philosophy of the Christians, though it has few attractions for those who relish nothing but error.

Rusticus. What! You wretch! Do you follow that doctrine?

Justin. I glory in it, because it secures to me the happiness of being in the path of truth.

Rusticus. What are the dogmas of the Christians?

Justin. We Christians believe in one only God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible; and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, foretold by the prophets, the Author and Preacher of Salvation, and the Judge of Mankind.

Rusticus. Where do the Christians assemble?

Justin. Where they choose and where they can.

Rusticus. I want to know where your disciples assemble.

Justin. I have lived hitherto at the Timothin Baths, on Mount Viminal. When anyone came to me, I taught him the doctrine of truth.

[1] *Apol.*, c. xl et xli.

Rusticus. Are you then a Christian?

Justin. Yes, I am.

The judge having put the same question to the rest of the accused, they all answered boldly, We are Christians. Coming back to Justin, he said to him, Listen, you who deliver orations and pride yourself on your knowledge! When I have torn you with scourges from head to foot, do you think that you will go up to Heaven in that state?

Justin. Yes, if I suffer the martyrdom you speak of, I hope to receive the reward which those have already received who have observed the precepts of Jesus Christ.

Rusticus. What! Do you imagine that a reward awaits you in Heaven?

Justin. I do not imagine it: I know it; I have not the least doubt of it.

Rusticus. Let us put all this aside, and come to the point: assemble, and sacrifice to the gods.

Justin (in the name of all). No sensible man will ever abandon the true Religion to run after impiety and error.

Rusticus. If you do not obey, you may expect to be treated without mercy.

Justin. We desire nothing so much as to suffer for Jesus Christ Our Lord. Torments will hasten the moment of our happiness, and inspire us with confidence at that tribunal before which all men must appear to be judged.

All the Martyrs together. There is no use in wasting time. We are Christians, and we will not sacrifice to idols.

The prefect, seeing it impossible to move them, pronounced this sentence: We command that those who would not sacrifice to the gods nor obey the emperor, be scourged and beheaded.

Having reached the place of execution, the holy martyrs consummated their sacrifice, praising God and confessing Jesus Christ till their last breath. A few Christians carried off their bodies privately, and gave them a suitable burial.

Wherever the enemy of Christianity presented himself, there did brave athletes stand forward to cover him with shame and confusion. Let us go to Smyrna, through which we lately passed with the great St. Ignatius, when on his way to triumph over the devil in the very capital of his empire. We saw St. Polycarp, the Bishop of this city, kissing respectfully the glorious chains of the future martyr. The hour is come for himself to walk in the blood-stained footprints of Ignatius, his illustrious fellow-disciple.

Polycarp, converted when very young to Christianity, had the happin[illegible] conversing with the Apostles themselves and of

imbibing the true spirit of the Divine Master from their instructions. He was consecrated Bishop of Smyrna by St. John the Evangelist. He became the oracle of the Churches of Asia. A persecution having been kindled, a great many Christians were brought to Smyrna to be put to death. Among the number was a young man named Germanicus, who attracted special attention. The proconsul exhorting him in the midst of the amphitheatre to have pity on himself and to consider his age, he made no answer, but, full of a holy impatience, delivered himself at once to the teeth of the wild beasts, that he might depart speedily from a wicked world. The people, surprised and offended at the heroic courage of Germanicus and his companions, began to cry out with one voice, Away with the impious! away with the impious! let Polycarp be sought for!

St. Polycarp was not the man to fear death; but, yielding to the entreaties of his friends, he had retired to the country. He was residing in a house not far from the city, and his whole occupation was to pray night and day. He was soon discovered. Herod, the irenarch[1] of Smyrna, sent horsemen by night to surround the house in which Polycarp was staying. It would have been easy for the Saint to escape, but he had no wish to do so. He surrendered himself into the hands of the soldiers, saying, The will of the Lord be done! He gave them to eat and drink as much as they chose, and only asked them for a little time to pray, which was granted to him. He prayed standing, with his eyes raised to Heaven, for his flock and for all the Churches of the world. His prayer lasted more than two hours. He made it so piously that several of the horsemen repented of having come to arrest such a venerable old man.

At length, the moment having come to enter on the thorny path that should lead to glory, he was set upon an ass and brought towards the city. In a little while the party met a chariot, which bore the irenarch Herod and his father Nicetas. The latter courteously invited Polycarp to join them, and strove to win him over by asking him again and again what harm there was in saying Lord Cæsar, or even in sacrificing, in order to save his life. The Saint kept silence. At length, as they were pressing him, he answered, I will never do what you require of me. On hearing these words, they overwhelmed him with insults, and rudely kicked him out of the chariot, so that he fell and broke his leg. The holy old man did not lose his patience: he walked on as cheerfully as if nothing had happened, letting himself be led to the amphitheatre.

[1] An irenarch was a magistrate appointed to keep the peace and to apprehend malefactors.

When he entered it, a voice came from Heaven, saying, Polycarp, be of good courage! The Christians who were present heard this voice.

The holy Bishop was brought to the foot of the tribunal occupied by the proconsul, who said to him, Swear by the fortune of Cæsar, and I will release you; insult your Christ.

Polycarp. I have served Him these fourscore and six years, and He has never done me any harm; on the contrary, He has done me ever so much good. How can I insult my King, who has saved me?

The Proconsul. Give an account to these people of your belief.

Polycarp. I will give an account of it to you, for Religion teaches us to render to the powerful that honour which is due to them, and which is not incompatible with the honour due to God; but, as for these people, they are not my judges, that I should endeavour to justify myself in their eyes.

The Proconsul (angrily). Are you aware that I have wild beasts, and that I shall cast you to them, if you do not change?

Polycarp. Let them come: I cannot change from good to evil.

The Proconsul. If you despise the beasts, I will burn you.

Polycarp. The fire with which you threaten me burns only for a time; but you are not acquainted with that which the Supreme Judge has kindled to consume the wicked, and which shall never be extinguished. Why do you delay? Do whatever you please.

As the Saint pronounced these last words, a heavenly light appeared on his countenance. The proconsul himself was struck at it. Yet he did not hesitate to proceed to the last formality that used to take place in criminal judgments. He gave orders that a herald should cry out three times in the amphitheatre, Polycarp persists in confessing himself a Christian! After this proclamation, the whole multitude of Pagans and Jews had only one voice to demand his death. They shouted out tumultuously, This is the father of the Christians, the teacher of Asia, the destroyer of our gods! And they besought the magistrate to let loose a lion. He represented to them that he could not do so, because the displays with beasts had closed. They then began to cry out altogether, Let Polycarp be burned! At the same time the whole multitude burst out from the amphitheatre, and, running to the baths and shops, carried off everything that might serve to raise a pile. The Jews were the most eager of all. The pile being made, Polycarp laid aside his cincture and tunic. He then stooped down to take off his shoes: a thing that he was not accustomed to do, for the Faithful regarded him with so much veneration that everyone used to hasten to render him this service, in order to have the happiness of touching him.

As the executioners were preparing to fasten him to a stake with iron chains in the usual manner, he said to them, Your precautions are needless; He who gives me the grace to endure the fire, will also give me strength to stand steady on the pile. They were satisfied therefore to bind his hands behind his back. In this state he ascended the pile as an altar on which he should be sacrificed to God—one of the choicest victims in the whole flock.

Then, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, he pronounced these words, which were his last: O Lord God Almighty, Father of Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, by whom we have received the grace to know Thee, God of Angels and Archangels, Sovereign King of Heaven and earth, and Protector of the nation of the just who live in Thy presence, I return Thee thanks, I who am the least of Thy servants, for vouchsafing to let me put my lips to the chalice of which Jesus Christ was pleased to drink. Receive me this day into Thy holy presence, as a victim of sweet odour. Before this day closes, I shall behold the accomplishment of Thy promises. Therefore do I praise Thee, bless Thee, glorify Thee, through the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory now and for evermore. Amen.

Scarcely had he finished his prayer, when the flames, springing from the pile in immense wreaths, rose towards the sky. But God, wishing to honour His servant before men, performed a miracle, whose novelty amazed all those that witnessed it, and which they afterwards referred to as an evidence of the power of the Lord and the sanctity of His minister. The flames, spreading out to the right and left, and bending in the form of an arch, seemed like the sails of a ship filled with the wind. Not a single spark from the fiery vault durst touch the garments of the holy martyr. His sacred body was there in the midst of the flames, like gold or silver that has come forth from the crucible, and yielded a fragrance like that of delicious aromatics.

The astonished persecutors commanded a *confector*[1] to go near and examine well the truth of the prodigy. This man, having made his report, was then told to drive a spear into the Saint's body. He did so, and immediately there flowed forth such an immense quantity of blood that it extinguished the fire. Thus it was that Polycarp, Bishop and Doctor of the holy Church of Smyrna, consummated his sacrifice.

The authors of his acts continue thus: "We took away his remains, more precious than gold or jewels, and deposited them in

[1] *Confectors* were persons appointed to kill beasts and gladiators left wounded in the amphitheatre.

a suitable place, where we hope, by the mercy of God, to be able to assemble, in order to celebrate the day of his happy *birth*."

"We send you," they say to the Faithful of Philomelia, "by our brother Martinian, an exact account of all that occurred at this glorious death. Make it known to the other Churches, that the Lord may be blessed in all places. Salute all the Saints. They who are with us salute you. Evaristus, who has written this, salutes you with all his family.

"Our father suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, at two o'clock in the afternoon. He was arrested by Herod, the proconsul being Statius Quadratus. This was transcribed from the copy of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp. A thousand thanks be rendered to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belong honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given such illustrious witnesses to the Faith. Grant us the grace to profess our belief like St. Justin, and to burn with love like St. Polycarp.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will return good for evil.*

LESSON XIII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (SECOND CENTURY, *continued.*)

Miracle of the Thundering Legion. Martyrs of Lyons: St. Pothinus, St. Blandina, &c. Martyrdom of St. Symphorian of Autun.

WHILE Marcus Aurelius, by persecuting the Christians, was sending his most faithful subjects to death, the barbarians were forming a new league, which should bring the Empire to the brink of ruin. The people being unable to pay the new taxes, the emperor had to sell his richest furniture, his jewels, his statues, his pictures, his gold and silver vessels, and even the robes and pearls of his empress. This war was longer and more doubtful than any preceding one. The Quadi, a German tribe, drew the Roman army into a woody and mountainous country, from which escape was impossible. It was the middle of summer, and so great was the heat that there was no water to be found anywhere: the army was on the point of perishing from thirst. God, who directs all things to the glory of

Jesus Christ, and to the establishment of His eternal kingdom, has permitted this occurrence in order to procure a moment's rest for His Church.

In the Roman army there were a great many Christian soldiers, chiefly from Melitena, a city of Armenia, and its neighbourhood. They went down on their knees, and addressed fervent prayers to God. All of a sudden the sky became covered over with clouds, and a plentiful rain fell on the side of the Romans. At first they held up their heads and received the water in their open mouths, so long as their thirst pressed them. They then filled their helmets, and drank abundantly, themselves and their horses. The barbarians thought the moment favourable for an attack; but the heavens, taking up arms in support of the Romans, sent such a fearful volley of hail and thunder upon them, that their battalions were overpowered: this prodigy gave the victory to the Romans. The barbarians threw away their arms, and sought refuge with their enemies, in order to be secure from the thunderbolts that laid waste their camp.

Both the Romans and the barbarians looked upon this event as miraculous. The Christian troops who had obtained this favour from Heaven were named the *Thundering Legion.* The emperor himself wrote of the matter to the senate. To perpetuate the memory of this prodigy, it was represented in bass-relief on the Antonine Column,—erected in the centre of Rome and still existing. Taking up more kindly sentiments towards the Christians, Marcus Aurelius commanded them to be treated with less rigour, and forbade their being pursued on account of their religion.

Nevertheless, three years had scarcely rolled by when the persecution burst out again more fiercely than ever: this was in the year of Our Lord 175. Lyons was the chief scene of it. The particulars of the glorious conflict maintained by our ancestors are to be found in an admirable letter written by the Faithful of this city to their brethren in Asia. Every word of it still breathes the spirit of the blessed martyrs. Their blood, shed for Jesus Christ, still seems to gush forth therein.

"Our words," say the authors of this letter,[1] "can never tell all the evils with which the blind fury of the Gentiles has inspired them against the saints, nor all the cruel pains with which they have delighted to torture the blessed martyrs. The enemy exerts all his power against us, and lets us see beforehand what may be expected from him when, at the end of the world, he will be permitted to attack the Church. It is not enough to drive us from our houses,

[1] St. Irenæus is supposed to be its principal author

from the baths and public places: we are even forbidden to appear anywhere.

"But grace, superior to all the powers of hell, has withdrawn the weak from danger, and exposed only the bravest to the onslaughts of their enemies. At first they were attacked by the people with a blind impetuosity. Struck down in a moment, they were dragged along the ground, beaten with stones, robbed, thrown into prison. This first transport over, matters proceeded more regularly. The tribune and the magistrates of the city ordered the Christians to appear in the public place. Having been questioned before the people, they gloriously confessed their Faith. After this confession, they were put in prison until the governor should arrive. As soon as he came, they were brought before him. This passionate judge treated them so cruelly that Epagathus, one of our brethren, asked to be let say a word in favour of the Christians. Epagathus was a young man, full of the love of God and the neighbour. His morals were so pure that, though his age was far from being advanced, he was compared to the holy old man Zacharias, the father of the incomparable John the Baptist.

"The people, who were acquainted with his merits, cried out tumultuously against the proposal that he had made, and the governor, as resolute as partial, immediately interrupted him by asking him if he was a Christian. On making a declaration of his Faith, he was ranked among the martyrs, and the governor gave him in raillery the title of The Advocate of the Christians—thus delivering, without intending it, his highest eulogy.

"This example gave new courage to the rest of the Christians. There were many of them who, having been a long time preparing themselves for any kind of event, showed themselves ready to die; but there were others who, not having been exercised in conflict, gave sad proofs of their frailty. Ten apostatised: their lamentable fall excites our tears. We were thrown into a state of consternation: not that torments or death made us afraid, but we were always apprehensive lest anyone belonging to us should yet chance to fall. Happily, the loss that we had experienced was well repaired by the fresh supplies of generous martyrs who were seized every day.

"The Pagans accused us of all sorts of crimes. Those who had previously retained some vestiges of humanity foamed with rage and loaded us with curses.[1] The persons who suffered most from

[1] The chief crime with which the Pagans reproached the Christians of Lyons, and all Christians in general, was that of eating together the flesh of a child. Having only a vague knowledge of the Blessed Eucharist, in which the flesh of the Saviour is truly eaten, the enemies of our ancestors accused them of

the blind hatred that urged on the governor, the soldiers, and the people, were the Deacon Sanctus, a native of Vienne; Maturus, who, though a neophyte, seemed full of strength and eagerness for the conflict; Attalus of Pergamus, the support and ornament of our Church; and, lastly, a female slave named Blandina, whose illustrious example shows that people of the lowest condition in the eyes of the world are often the most highly esteemed before God on account of the warmth of their love.

"Blandina was of so delicate a constitution that we trembled for her. Her mistress particularly, who was among the number of the martyrs, feared that she would never have the courage or the boldness to confess her Faith. But her great heart supplied so well for the weakness of her body, that she braved and wearied the executioners who tormented her from break of day till night. Every time that her tortures were changed, she gained new strength by pronouncing the sacred name of Jesus Christ, and saying, 'I am a Christian, and there are no crimes committed among us.' These words softened the stings of her pains, and communicated to her a kind of insensibility.

"The Deacon Sanctus also endured unheard-of torments with a patience more than human. To every question put to him he answered, 'I am a Christian.' The governor and the executioners could not contain themselves with rage. After trying all the other experiments that their cruelty could suggest, they applied hot plates of brass to the most tender parts of his body; but the martyr, strengthened by a powerful grace, continued steadfast in the profession of his Faith. He was then given up. After a few days, he was put to a new trial. The Pagans, seeing that his body was all inflamed, and that he could not even bear to be touched, imagined that they might easily attain their end of conquering him if they only reopened his wounds, or that, at least, he would expire in their hands—a thing that would strike the brethren with terror. Their hopes were mistaken. In effect, to the great amazement of the spectators, the Saint's body suddenly recovered all its strength, and the full use of its members. It was thus that, by a miracle of the grace of Jesus Christ, the torments intended to redouble his sufferings brought him a perfect cure.

"The devil thought himself sure of Biblis, one of the ten who had had the misfortune to deny their Faith, and he wanted to increase her guilt as well as her punishment by urging her on to calumniate

a degree of barbarity that fills us with horror. But their very accusation is a proof of the continual belief of Christians regarding the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist.

the Christians. He flattered himself that, being of a timid disposition, she could not hold out against a severe trial; but her torments produced quite a contrary effect. Biblis awoke as it were from a deep sleep. The pains of a passing hour having turned her thoughts to the eternal pains of hell, she cried out, 'Wicked people! how can you accuse Christians of eating the flesh of a child, when it is not even permitted them to touch the blood of beasts?'[1]

"The torments that we have just mentioned having been tried in vain, the devil invented another still more cruel. The martyrs were cast into a dark and loathsome dungeon, where their feet were fastened in wooden stocks[2] and stretched out to the fifth hole. This last punishment was so dreadful that many died of it.

"During these proceedings the blessed Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, had been arrested. He was a venerable old man, more than ninety years of age, so weak and infirm that he could hardly breathe; but an ardent desire of dying for Jesus Christ roused his vigour. He was carried by the soldiers to the tribunal. The magistrates and the people followed him, loading him with insults, as if he had been the Christ himself for whom they entertained so much horror. The governor asked him who was the God of the Christians. The holy man, to prevent his blasphemies, replied, 'You shall know Him if you make yourself worthy of Him.' Forthwith the people fell on him with all the impetuosity of wild beasts. Some beat and kicked him pitilessly, without any respect for his age; others, at a greater distance, seizing whatever they could lay their hands on, flung it at him. At length, the holy Bishop, having only a mere breath of life in him, was thrown into a close prison, where he expired two days afterwards.

"Several days having passed, it was resolved to complete the martyrdom of our holy confessors by various kinds of death. Providence so permitted it that there might be offered to the Eternal Father a crown made up of all sorts of flowers, more pleasing by their variety. Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus were accordingly destined for the amphitheatre. An extraordinary day was chosen to give a public display of pagan cruelty. Sanctus and Maturus passed anew through tortures the same as they had already suffered. Others were added, such as could be invented at the moment by an inhuman mob, and inflicted by furious executioners.

[1] The Christians still observed the law that had been given on this matter by the Apostles. (*Act.*, xv, 20.)

[2] This instrument of torture, in Latin *nervus*, was a wooden frame, pierced with several holes: the legs of the martyrs were sometimes extended to the fourth or fifth hole. Such a kind of test was very painful, as may easily be imagined.

"After a dreadful scourging, they were given over to wild beasts, which dragged them round the amphitheatre. At length, the spectators asked with one voice that the martyrs should be put into a red hot iron chair. Their flesh, broiling, filled the amphitheatre with a smell that would have been unendurable to any other than a cruel people, who delighted in it. Not a word could be extracted from the mouth of Sanctus beyond these: 'I am a Christian.' Having fought out the battle, together with Maturus, for a long time, the throats of both were cut. Their death closed the entertainment for this day.

"After them appeared Blandina. She was made fast to a post, there to be devoured by beasts. The saint remained for some time exposed to their fury, but not one of them would touch her. She was untied, and taken back to prison, to be reserved for another combat. Thus a poor and weak slave, being clothed with Jesus Christ, baffled all the malice of hell, and, by her unshaken constancy, deserved to rise to immortal glory.

"Attalus was next brought out, and, as he was a man of note, the people were loud in their shouts to see him suffer. He had always been highly esteemed among us. He entered the field of battle with a noble air. He was led round the amphitheatre, having before him a placard on which were to be read the words, *Attalus the Christian.*[1] The people never ceased asking his death; but the governor, having learned that he was a Roman citizen, sent him back to prison with several other martyrs. He wrote at the same time to Marcus Aurelius inquiring how he should act.

"During the delay, the holy martyrs gave us an example of every virtue. We could not help admiring their patience, their meekness, their intrepidity in replying to the pagans. They accused none; they excused all. In fine, like the first martyr of the Church, they prayed for their persecutors. They prayed specially for those who had had the misfortune of falling; and we had the consolation of seeing these generous penitents confess Jesus Christ, and voluntarily associate themselves with the martyrs.

"Meanwhile, the emperor's orders came to hand. They went on to say that those who persisted in their confession should be executed forthwith, and that those who abjured Christianity should be set free. The governor availed himself of a public festival, which had attracted a multitude of people to the city, to give a

[1] It was the Roman custom thus to make known the cause of condemnation. Romæ publico epulo servum ob detractum lectis argenteam laminam carnifici confestim tradidit, ut manibus abscissis, atque ante pectus e collo pendentibus, *præcedente titulo*, qui causam pœnæ indicaret, per cœtus epulantium circumduceretur. (Suet., *in Calig.*, xxxii: *id.*, *in Domit.*, x.)

display, namely, an execution of martyrs. He brought them before his tribunal, and examined them anew. Finding them resolute, he condemned those who were Roman citizens to be beheaded, and all the others to be exposed to the beasts.

"Alexander, a Phrygian by birth and a physician by profession, was present when those who had fallen were led into the governor's presence. He was a man full of the apostolic spirit. For many years he had lived in Gaul, where he was universally respected on account of his love for God and the freedom with which he published the Gospel. Being near the tribunal therefore at this critical moment, he made various signs with his head and eyes, encouraging his brethren to confess Jesus Christ. His agitation, which was continual, and greater than that of a woman in labour, was soon remarked. The Pagans, indignant to see those who had previously denied the Faith confess it now, laid hold of Alexander, and cried out that he was the author of the change. Whereupon the judge, turning towards him, asked him who and what he was. Alexander replied without any shuffling that he was a Christian. His answer so provoked the governor that, without any other information, he was immediately condemned to be devoured by the beasts. Next day he was led out into the arena with Attalus, and both completed their sacrifice by the sword.

"On the last day of the sports, Blandina, and Ponticus, a boy only fifteen years old, were brought into the amphitheatre. They had both been present at the execution of the martyrs on all the days preceding. They were urged to swear by the idols. Their refusal to obey threw the Pagans into a most violent rage. All kinds of torments were heaped on them.

"Ponticus, encouraged by his companion, passed joyfully through all the stages of his martyrdom, and closed his life by a glorious death. Thus Blandina remained the last in the arena, surrounded by the bodies of martyrs and sprinkled with their generous blood. Like a mother full of tenderness for her children, she had exhorted her brethren to suffer patiently, and had sent them before her to the King of Heaven. Then going through the same trials, she joyfully beheld the approach of the moment that would reunite her with them in glory. She was scourged, torn by beasts, and placed in the burning chair. Afterwards, she was wrapt in a net, and exposed to the fury of a wild cow, which tossed and gored her for a long time. Last of all, her throat was cut. The Pagans themselves were amazed at the sight of her patience and courage. They acknowledged that no woman had ever been known among them to have endured such a long and wondrous series of tortures."

In the course of the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, Lyons

counted as many as nineteen thousand martyrs. At the sight of the fidelity, courage, and fervour of these holy confessors, of every age and state, what shall we say of our tepidity and indifference?

From Smyrna, where we assisted at the triumph of St. Polycarp, we have paid a visit to the Gauls. Lyons has detained us for a long time: so numerous are its martyrs! It will soon present us with others again. Meanwhile, let us salute with a parting glance this Gaulish Rome, and set out for a neighbouring city, once its rival: Autun has heroes to introduce to us.

Symphorian, the descendant of a noble and Christian family, excited the admiration of his fellow-citizens by the extent of his learning and the amiability of his character. He was in the flower of his age, when called to make the sacrifice of his life. His father was named Faustus—illustrious by his forefathers, more illustrious by his son. Autun, whose antiquity reached very far back, was reckoned among the most celebrated cities of the Gauls; but, at the same time, it was one of the most superstitious. On a certain day of the year, the statue of Cybele, called the Mother of the Gods and also the Good Goddess, used to be borne through the streets of Autun in a magnificently decorated chariot. A great multitude of people used to assemble at this sacrilegious ceremony. Symphorian, being found on one of these occasions not to have adored the idol, was arrested by the populace, and led away to Heraclius, the governor of the province, who was then in the city, whither he had come to seek out Christians.

Heraclius, taking his seat on the tribunal, said to Symphorian, Your name and your profession?

Symphorian. I am a Christian. I am called Symphorian.

Heraclius. You are a Christian. How have you been able to escape me? There are hardly any of these people left. Tell me: why have you refused to adore the good goddess?

Symphorian. I have told you already: it is because I am a Christian. I adore no one but the true God who is in Heaven. I am so far from thinking of adoring that vain image of the devil, that, if you give me a hammer, I will soon put your goddess in pieces.

Heraclius. This young man is not content with sacrilege: he adds rebellion to impiety. Does he belong to this place?

An officer answered, Yes, my lord, he belongs to this city and to one of its chief families.

Heraclius (to Symphorian). Is it this, then, that makes you so haughty? Are you not acquainted with the ordinances of our princes? Let them be read.

The clerk of the court read, "The Emperor Marcus Aurelius to the governors, judges, magistrates, presidents, and other chief

officers of our empire. Having learned that certain people, who call themselves Christians, make no scruple of violating the holiest laws of religion, we desire that they should be proceeded against with all rigour, and we enjoin upon you to punish them with various tortures, when they fall into your hands, unless they agree to sacrifice to our gods." The reading over, the examination recommenced.

Heraclius. What do you say now, Symphorian? Do you think that I have the power to go contrary to the express commands of the emperor? You cannot deny that you are guilty of two crimes: sacrilege towards the gods, and rebellion against Cæsar. Obey, or the offended gods and the violated laws demand your blood.

Symphorian. The image is only an illusion of which the devil makes use to deceive men. As for us, we have a God who rewards and punishes: so long as I remain faithful to Him, I have nothing to fear.

Heraclius, seeing that he could make no impression on the young man, ordered him to be beaten severely by his lictors,[1] and sent back to prison. Two days afterwards, Symphorian was brought out again.

Heraclius. Consider how much wiser it would be for you to serve the immortal gods, and to receive a gratuity from the public treasury, with an honourable place in the army. I shall have the altar adorned with flowers, and you will offer to the gods the incense that is due to them.

Symphorian. A magistrate, intrusted with the prince's authority and charged with the care of public affairs, ought not to waste time in useless discourses.

Heraclius. At least sacrifice, so as to enjoy the honours that await you at court.

Symphorian. A judge degrades his position, when he employs it to lay snares for the innocent. You offer me in a golden cup a poisonous draught. I refuse all the advantages that are offered to me by any other hand than the adorable hand of Jesus Christ. He alone can confer lasting happiness.

Heraclius. You tire out my patience at last. Either sacrifice, or I will take off your head at the feet of the good goddess.

Symphorian. I fear the almighty God, who has given me being and life, and I adore Him alone. My body is in your power, and your power will not continue long; but my soul is independent of your power.

The martyr was interrupted by the judge, who, unable to

[1] Those were called *lictors* who carried axes and bundles of rods before Roman magistrates.

conceal his rage, pronounced excitedly the following sentence: We declare Symphorian guilty of the crime of treason against all that is divine and human, as well by refusing to sacrifice to the gods as by speaking disrespectfully of them: in reparation for which, we condemn him to die by the sword, the avenger of the gods and of the laws.

The Saint listened joyfully to his sentence. As he was being led away to death, his mother, venerable by her years and her virtues, exhorted him from the walls of the city to die as a true soldier of Jesus Christ. My son, she cried out to him, my son Symphorian, remember the living God; my son, be of good heart; look up to Heaven, and think of Him who reigns there; do not fear a death that will bring you to everlasting life!

It was outside the city, near a little fountain whose waters still flow, that the holy martyr was beheaded. His sacrifice took place in the year of Our Lord 180.

The tyrant who had issued the decree that sent Symphorian and so many other holy martyrs to such dreadful tortures, died the same year. God struck him when far from his friends and kindred. The unfortunate man let himself die of hunger, being scarcely fifty-nine years of age, and thus verified the words of Scripture: They who are deceitful and bloodthirsty shall not see half their days. At his death, the Roman Empire, drunk with blood, covered from head to foot with the leprosy of crime, and threatened everywhere by the tribes of the North, was already shaking to its centre. In a little while the hand of the Almighty would reduce it to dust.

Marcus Aurelius was succeeded by the infamous Commodus. Under this emperor, says Eusebius, our affairs remained pretty tranquil, and, by the mercy of God, the Church enjoyed a profound peace throughout the whole earth. Nevertheless, there were several martyrs during this interval—among others St. Apollonius, one of the apologists of Religion.

In the first two centuries, the conflict of the old society with the new was almost continual. While armed passions pursued the Christians, philosophers attacked the doctrines of Christianity and endeavoured to depreciate them in the estimation of the people. Last of all, a considerable number of heretics began to raise divisions in the fold. In spite of so many obstacles, Christianity established itself in all parts of the world—at Rome, at Athens, at Alexandria, in Gaul. The immense success of the Gospel is attested by all Christian authors and by the Pagans themselves.[1] Now, the Christians, with whom the Empire was full, were neither a credu-

[1] *Letter of Pliny*; Lucian, *Dial. Peregr.*

ous sect, eager for novelties, nor a stupid and superstitious mob. They were upright persons of every state and condition, whose good sense made impostors tremble.'

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having established Religion in spite of all obstacles, and for having thereby taught us that it is Thy work. Grant us the lively faith of the martyrs, that, like them, we may resist all the enemies of our salvation.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often say like the martyrs, I am a Christian.*

LESSON XIV.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (THIRD CENTURY.)

Picture of the Third Century. Tertullian. Origen. Seventh Persecution under Septimus Severus: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Perpetua and St. Felicitas.

During the third century, the devil, who saw his empire crumbling on all sides, and the kingdom of truth and holiness rising on its ruins, gathered together all his forces to strike one great blow and to crush the new society. By the side of proconsuls, preceded by the sword, walked an army of impostors—philosophers, magicians, heretics, apostles of every error and vice. The Infant Church was attacked on all sides. She did not know, so to speak, what was best to be done. However, God was with her, and His beloved Spouse, sustained by His powerful arm, faced every danger. To executioners, she opposes her martyrs; to philosophers and heretics, her apologists; to illusions, miracles; to all vices, all virtues. The conflict begins. Edicts of proscription, calumnies, wrongs, fall on the Church like a heavy shower of hail. Let us recollect ourselves, and let our souls take part in the combat.

At this moment appear on the scene two men, destined to bear the full shock of the enemy. We see them continually passing from the bar, where Christians are judged, to assemblies of philosophers or heretics, wherein falsehood is preached—defending vigorously the innocence of their brethren, and shattering error to pieces. These two men are Tertullian and Origen.

[1] Just., i, *Apol.*, c. xxv.

The first was born at Carthage about the year 160. He was the son of a centurion belonging to the proconsular troops of Africa. The constancy of the martyrs had opened his eyes to the delusions of Paganism. He became a Christian. Shortly afterwards, honoured with the priesthood on account of his virtue and learning, he left Carthage and went to Rome. It is the general opinion that it was in this latter city that he published his *Apologetic*, during the persecution of the Emperor Severus, about the year 202. This work holds a leading place among the masterpieces left us by Christian antiquity. It has spread the author's fame as far as the Church itself, that is to say, to the ends of the earth.[1] The pen with which Tertullian writes is a thunderbolt. Its flashes are most bright; its peals, loud. Wherever it falls, it leaves nothing but ruins. His criticism is not only a light that shines, but a flame that destroys.

His *Apologetic*, the fullest and most celebrated of all the apologies put forward by Christians, gave a death-blow to Paganism.

Tertullian begins by justifying Christians from the accusations calumniously heaped on them, and shows that it is the height of injustice to punish them merely for their name. Then follows a refutation of idolatry. We should hear the repeated strokes of his terrible hammer on the old edifice of Paganism, as he demolishes it to the bare foundations, turning into ridicule both its gods and their adorers. To the refutation of idolatry succeeds an exposition of the Christian Religion, as well as of the sufferings of our ancestors. He sets forth in brilliant colours the submission of the Christians to the emperors, the love which they bore to their enemies, the charity which united them with one another, the horror with which they were filled for vice, and the constancy with which they met tortures and death for the sake of virtue.

The idolators called them, in mockery, *Sarmentians* and *Semaxians*, because they used to be fastened to the trunks of trees, and tied to faggots to be cast into the fire. Tertullian makes answer to them in these terms: "The misery to which we are reduced when about to be burned is our most beautiful ornament. The instruments of torture that you prepare for us are our festive robes, embroidered with palm-branches in token of victory. The funeral pile is our triumphal car. Who ever examined our Religion without embracing it? . . . And who ever embraced it without being ready to suffer for it? We return you thanks when you condemn us, because there is an infinite distance between the judgment of God and that of men: when you condemn us, God absolves us."

After bringing the pagans to the ground, the vigorous athlete

[1] Eusebius, l. II, c. ii.

turns round on the heretics. Armed with his mighty logic, he confounds in a single argument all past, present, and future heresies. This argument is that of prescription.[1] Here it is. *The True Church is that which goes back uninterruptedly to Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church alone goes back uninterruptedly to Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Catholic Church alone is the True Church.* As a consequence, Tertullian, addressing the innovators, says to them, "Who are you? Whence do you come? You are of yesterday. You have just been born. The day before yesterday, nobody knew you. I stop you at your first step, says the Catholic Church. I existed before you. I trace my origin back to Jesus Christ. It is I that have given the world His lessons and those of His Apostles. As for you, you are only of yesterday: what are you doing in my house, not belonging to my family? By what title, Marcion, do you cut down my trees? Who gave you leave, Valentine, to turn aside my streams? Who empowered you, Apelles,[2] to meddle with my landmarks? How dare you think of having free quarters here? The property is mine. I have been in possession for a long time. I take precedence in possession: I descend from the old possessors, and I prove my descent by authentic titles.[3] These titles are the uninterrupted succession of our Bishops from the Apostles and the uniformity of their doctrine with the Apostolic doctrine."

Tertullian then makes use of this argument against the individual heretics whom he refutes, such as Marcion, Valentine, Apelles, and Hermogenes.

After serving the Church so well till about the middle of his life, that is to say, till the age of forty, and even more, Tertullian fell into error. His fall ought to make us tremble. If the cedars of Libanus are laid low, what will become of weak reeds? But this misfortune does not lessen the value of his previous writings. We must speak of him as of an able man whose mind has gone astray: his folly does not render useless all that he has done in his better days for the advancement of knowledge.[4]

[1] The term "prescription" is, as every one knows, taken from jurisprudence, and means an absolute refusal, a well-established exception, which the defendant opposes to the plaintiff, and in virtue of which the latter is declared incapable of taking an action, without there being a necessity of inquiring thoroughly into his reasons and his means.

[2] The name of several heretics in those times.

[3] Mea est possessio, olim possideo, prior possideo, habeo origines firmas ab ipsis auctoribus quorum fuit res Ego sum hæres Apostolorum. Sicut caverunt testamento suo, sicut fidei commiserunt, sicut adjuraverunt, ita teneo (C. xxxvii.)

[4] Besides the *Apologetic* and the *Prescriptions*, Tertullian composed other works before his fall. Namely:—

1. Two books *Against the Gentiles*. In the first he refutes the calumnies

While Tertullian supported the cause of Christianity in the West, Origen defended it in the East. This great man, the son of the holy martyr Leonidas, was born at Alexandria in the year 185. Gifted with a more sublime genius than has perhaps ever been granted to any other man, Origen took the lead in all sciences. At eighteen years of age, he was entrusted with the catechetical school of Alexandria: its object was to initiate catechumens in the truths of Faith. The talents displayed by Origen excited general respect and admiration. People came from all parts to consult him, and he soon found himself at the head of an immense number of disciples. From his school came forth the priests and doctors who enlightened the Church by their learning, and the martyrs who cemented it with their blood. His love for poverty was equal to his zeal for study: he used to go barefoot and to abstain from flesh-meat. A great weakness of stomach could alone induce him to take a little wine. He always slept on the ground, and kept long fasts and watches.

It was thus that God prepared the valiant athlete who should defend the Church. Origen was not slow to enter the lists. Celsus, an Epicurean philosopher, had gathered together against the Christians all the calumnies and sophistries invented regarding them by Jews and idolators. He added new ones so successfully

that are heaped on Christians by idolators, and in the second he attacks the worship of false deities.

2. A book *Against the Jews.* Tertullian takes in hand to show the triumph won by the Faith over the Jews, a blinded and hardened people, who seem deaf to all arguments.

3. A book *Against Hermogenes.* Hermogenes, a Stoic philosopher, spread through Africa a new heresy, which consisted in maintaining that matter was eternal. Tertullian refutes him.

4. A book *Against the Valentinians.* Tertullian aims rather at ridiculing than at seriously refuting the extravagant opinions entertained by these heretics.

5. A book *On Penance.* In the first part, Tertullian treats of repentance for sins committed before Baptism, and, in the second, of repentance for sins committed after Baptism. He teaches that the Church has power to forgive all sins.

6. A book *On Prayer.* It consists of two parts: in the first, the Lord's Prayer is explained; in the second, he treats of various ceremonies observed in prayer.

7. A book *On Penance.* The motives to practise this virtue are developed therein with much eloquence.

8. A book *On Martyrdom.* Nothing more affecting than this can be read anywhere.

9. A book *On Baptism.* In the first part, Tertullian proves its necessity, and, in the second, treats of several points of discipline relating to this Sacrament.

10. Two books *To his Wife.* They were composed by Tertullian before his ordination. In the first, he exhorts his wife not to marry again if she shall

that he left nothing to be said by the enemies of Religion who should come after him. A master in disputation, his quick mind saw how to arrange a multitude of plausible objections in the fairest colours. Hereto he added that incisive style and unfaltering tone which are always sure to impose on the multitude, and, moreover, an extraordinary talent for satire, which made him delight in ridiculing his adversaries.

This was the man whom Origen had to contend with. He attacks him with all the advantages that are given, especially in a good cause, by a mighty genius, great erudition, a sound judgment, a clear and logical mind. He follows him step by step, and traces all his arguments to their true sources: at one time showing how facts have been altered, at another how they have been purposely obscured. He then establishes the truth of Christianity by the evidence resulting from historical facts. This is what made St. Jerome say that we find in the works of Origen wherewith to refute all the objections that have been or that can be raised against Religion.[1]

Like Tertullian, Origen had also the misfortune to maintain erroneous doctrines; but it would appear that he was never obstinate in his wrong sentiments.[2]

outlive him. In the second, he acknowledges that it is permitted to marry again: he concludes with a beautiful description of Christian marriage.

11. A book *On Shows*. Tertullian makes clear that they are an occasion of impurity and of many other vices.

12. A book *On Idolatry*. Here are decided many cases of conscience regarding the worship of false deities.

13. Two books *On the Ornaments or Dress of Women*. Modesty in attire is much recommended, and the practice of painting the face is severely proscribed.

14. A book *On the Necessity of Virgins being Veiled*. Tertullian shows that young females should cover their face in church.

15. A book *On the Testimony of the Soul*. The author's object is to show, by the testimony of every man's soul, that there is only one God.

16. A book entitled *Scorpiace*, written to put the Faithful on their guard against the poison of the Scorpions, that is, the Gnostics.

17. A book on *Chastity*. Tertullian dissuades a widow from marrying a second time, which, however, he admits to be permissible.

After his fall, Tertullian wrote the following:—(1) five books *Against Marcion*; (2) a book *On the Soul of Jesus Christ*; (3) a book *On the Resurrection of the Body*; (4) a book *On the Soldier's Crown*; (5) a book *On the Philosopher's Cloak*, defending the costume of philosophers, which many did not think it necessary to lay aside after their conversion; (6) a book *To Scapula*; (7) a book *Against Praxeas*; (8) a book *On Continency*; (9) a book *On Flight in Persecution*; (10) a book *On Fasting*; (11) a book *On Monogamy*.

[1] Ep. *ad Mag.*; Euseb., l. I, *adv. Hieroclem.*

[2] His most celebrated works are, with his *Refutation of Celsus*, his *Hexapla*, or Bible in six columns; *Commentaries on Scripture*; and a book *On Martyrdom*, addressed to Christians detained in prison for the name of Jesus Christ.

Providence, which, at the precise moment, had brought forward the apologists of truth to meet the champions of error, opposed with no less success the war that armed tyrants waged against Christianity. The martyrs appeared in crowds before the tribunals, and their blood, their constancy, and their spotless purity, were an answer to every charge. Since the year 200, the edicts of persecution had been renewed by Septimus Severus: his cruelty merited for him a place among tyrants. To a few good qualities, this prince joined all those vices which make a man detestable. He was crafty, insincere, false, treacherous, covetous, selfish, irritable, merciless. The Empire, having been auctioned by the prætorians, was purchased by Didius Julianus. Severus, then Governor of Illyria, induced his troops to revolt, went to Rome, rid himself of his competitors, and slaughtered or exiled many senators, whose goods he confiscated. He then passed into Gaul, and defeated Albinus, the Governor of Great Britain. Severus chanced to see his enemy's body lying on the field of battle, and forthwith he made his horse trample on it: such a use of victory shows that he was not worthy to conquer. Shortly afterwards he put to death the wife and children of Albinus, and threw their corpses into the Tiber. Having read the papers belonging to this unfortunate man, he sent to death all who had joined his party.' The leading personages of Rome, with a number of distinguished ladies, were involved in the massacre.

Under such a prince, the blood of Christians soon flowed in great streams: all the Churches of the world had martyrs. Among the foremost appeared two heroines, ever memorable in the annals of Religion—SS. Perpetua and Felicitas. Perpetua herself wrote the account of her martyrdom. It is now particularly that we must recollect ourselves to listen to a narrative drawn up in a prison, on the eve of the writer's going to death.

The 7th of March, 203, witnessed the arrest in Carthage of five young catechumens, by command of the proconsul, Firminianus.[1] Their names were Revocatus and Felicitas, of servile condition, Saturninus, Secundulus, and Viba Perpetua Felicitas was at the time seven months gone with child, and Perpetua had an infant at her breast. The latter of these virtuous women was twenty-two years of age, descended from a respectable family, and married to a man of quality. Her father and mother were also alive. Of three brothers whom she had, one, named Dinocrates, had died when about seven years old. The father, who was advanced in

[1] The proconsul was a magistrate whom Rome sent to command in a province with all the authority that consuls had in Rome.

years and strongly attached to heathenism, loved Perpetua more than any of his other children. As for the mother, it seems that she was a Christian, as well as one of the brothers; the other was only a catechumen. Saturus, who was probably a brother of Saturninus, and who had instructed our holy martyrs, freely let himself be imprisoned along with them, that he might share their fate. When these generous soldiers of Jesus Christ had been arrested, they were kept shut up in a private house for several days. It was here that the assaults which they had to endure from nature and hell began. But let us hear St. Perpetua herself.

"We were still in the hands of our persecutors," she says, "when my father, urged on by his affection, made new efforts to shake my constancy. 'Father,' said I to him, 'can this earthen vessel that you see here change its name?' 'Certainly not,' he answered. 'So,' replied I, 'it is impossible for me to be anything but what I am, that is to say, a Christian.' At these words, my father fell on me as if he would tear out my eyes; but he had to content himself with beating me, and then withdrew, quite disappointed that he could not overcome my resolution by all the artifices that the devil had suggested to him. Having been some days without seeing him again, I returned thanks to God, and was comforted by his absence. We profited of this short interval to receive Baptism. On coming forth from the water, the Holy Ghost inspired me to ask nothing but patience under torments.

"A few days afterwards, we were taken to prison: I was terrified thereat, for I had never seen such darkness before.[1] We suffered much that day, as well from the heat caused by the crowd as from the insolence of the soldiers who guarded us. What gave me most pain of all was that I had not my infant. But the good deacons Tertius and Pomponius, who assisted us, obtained, by the help of money, our removal for a few hours to a place where we could breathe. While the others were thinking of what concerned themselves, I gave my infant, which had been brought to me, the breast. I begged my mother to take care of it, and I encouraged her as well as my brother. I was full of sorrow to see how deeply affected they were on my account. For several days I remained in this state of anguish; but, leave having been given me to keep my babe in the prison with me, I was greatly comforted, and my abode appeared delightful: I was as well pleased to be there as elsewhere

"One day, my brother said to me, 'I know, sister, that you have great influence with God. Ask Him, therefore, I beg of you,

[1] The prisons of the Romans were dismal dungeons, into which the light could penetrate only by a very narrow opening: witness the Mamertine prison at Rome, and others in many old amphitheatres.

to inform you by some vision whether you are to suffer martyrdom, and tell me afterwards.' As I felt that God gave me daily a thousand tokens of His goodness, I answered my brother confidently, 'You shall know to-morrow how affairs are to end.' I besought the Lord accordingly to send me a vision, and this is the one that I had:—

"I saw a ladder of immense height, which reached from earth to heaven, but so narrow that only one person could mount it at a time. Its two sides were covered with swords, lances, hooks, and knives, so that if anyone should attempt to go up carelessly, or without looking before him, he could not escape being severely cut by all those instruments. At the foot of the ladder was a dragon of considerable size, which seemed always ready to pounce on those who came forward to make the ascent.

"The first to go up was Saturus, who was not with us when we were arrested, but who afterwards surrendered himself freely for our sake. When he had reached the top of the ladder, he turned towards me, and said, 'Perpetua, I am waiting for you; but take care that the dragon does not bite you.' I answered, 'In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, it will do me no harm.' Then, as if it was afraid of me, it quietly lifted its head from under the ladder, and I, setting my foot thereon, made use of it as the first rung. When I had come to the top of the ladder, I saw a man of great height, dressed as a shepherd, with white hair. He was milking his sheep, and was surrounded by a countless multitude of people arrayed in white. He called me by my name, and said, 'My daughter, you are welcome.' He gave me a kind of curds made from the milk that he had drawn. I received it by joining my hands, and partook of it. All those who were present answered, *Amen*. I awoke at this sound, chewing something very sweet.

"I related this vision to my brother, and we concluded from it that we should suffer death. We began therefore to detach ourselves from all earthly things, and to turn our thoughts towards eternity. A few days afterwards, the rumour having been spread abroad that we were about to be questioned, I had another visit from my father: sorrow was pictured on his face. 'My daughter,' he said to me, 'take pity on my gray hairs: have compassion on me. If I am worthy that you should call me your father, if I have myself brought you up to your present age, if you have always had a preference in my heart before all my other children, do not make me the disgrace of men! Have respect for your brothers, for your mother, for your son who cannot live after you. Lay aside this stubbornness, lest it destroy us all: for none of us can ever venture to appear in public, if you be sentenced to execution.'

"While speaking thus, my father kissed my hands. Then, throwing himself in tears at my feet, he called me, not 'my daughter,' but 'my lady.' My distress was very great, when I thought that, of all my family, he should be the only one not to rejoice at my martyrdom. To console him, I said, 'Nothing will happen but what pleases God: our fate is in His hands, not in our own.' He went away overwhelmed with grief.

"Next day, while we were at dinner, an order came suddenly to bring us forth for examination. The report of this spread immediately through every part of the city, and the audience chamber was soon filled with an immense crowd. We were placed on a kind of stage before the judge. All those who were examined before me confessed Jesus Christ bravely. My turn having come, I was preparing to answer, when behold! my father appeared, having with him my child, borne by a servant. He drew me a little aside, and tried every stratagem that tenderness could suggest to move me regarding the fate of that innocent creature. Hilarian took part with my father. 'What!' said he, 'will you have no regard for the gray hairs of a father whom you are going to leave in misery, or the innocence of a child that will become an orphan by your death? Only sacrifice for the prosperity of the emperors!' I replied, 'I will not sacrifice.' Hilarian asked, 'Are you then a Christian?' 'Yes,' said I, 'I am a Christian.'

"Meanwhile my father, who was remaining near in the hope of being able to carry me off, received a stroke of a staff from an officer, who was driving him away by orders of Hilarian. This stroke pained me very much, and I felt deeply grieved to see my father treated so rudely in his old age. The judge then pronounced our sentence, condemning us to be thrown to the beasts. We returned to prison full of joy. As soon as I arrived, I besought the deacon Pomponius to ask my child from my father; but my father would not send it to me."

It would seem that Secundulus had died in prison before the examination, since there is no mention made of him. Hilarian, before pronouncing sentence, had caused Saturus, Saturninus, and Revocatus to be cruelly scourged, and Perpetua and Felicitas to be beaten on the face. He deferred the execution of the martyrs to the entertainments that should be given on the festival of Geta, whom the Emperor Severus, his father, had made Cæsar, when Caracala was proclaimed Augustus.

St. Perpetua resumes her narrative. "We were soon removed to the prison of the camp. We were all kept in chains till the very day on which we should be exposed to the beasts. Meanwhile the officer, named Pudens, who had command over the guards of

the prison, seeing that God favoured us with many gifts, conceived a high esteem for us, and freely admitted the brethren who came to see us, whether to console us or to be themselves consoled. When the time appointed for the public shows drew nigh, my father paid me a visit. He was in a state of dejection that cannot be described. He tore his beard, threw himself on the ground, lay there prostrate, cursed his old age, and said things capable of moving any creature. I was ready to die of grief to see him in such a state." Here ends the account given by St. Perpetua: what follows was written by an eye-witness.

As has been said, Felicitas was seven months gone with child. Seeing the day of the shows so near, she was deeply afflicted, fearing lest her martyrdom should be postponed, because it was not allowed to execute women with child before the expiration of their term. The companions of her sacrifice were greatly saddened at the thought of leaving her alone on the road of their common hope. They accordingly set themselves to pray for her, that she might be delivered before the day of the combat. Immediately after their prayers, her pains began. So violent were they, that she was a few times obliged to scream out. "You that so pity yourself," said one of the turnkeys to her, "what will you do when you are exposed to the beasts?" "It is I," replied Felicitas "who now suffer what I suffer; but then there will be another in me who will suffer for me, because I shall suffer for Him." She brought forth a daughter, whom a Christian woman reared as her own child.

Meanwhile the tribune, who had the holy martyrs under his care, treated them with the utmost rigour. Perpetua, never departing from her great character, said to him boldly, "How dare you treat so severely the prisoners who belong to Cæsar, and who are intended for the combat on the day of his festival? Why do you refuse them the little comfort that is their right until that time? Will it not be an honour to you, if we appear strong and well fed?" The tribune, put to the blush by these reproaches, gave orders that the martyrs should be treated with greater humanity. The brethren were permitted to enter their prison, and to bring them some relief. Pudens, the governor of the jail, who had been converted, also rendered them privately all the good offices that lay in his power.

On the eve of the combat there was given them, in public, according to custom, the supper called the *free supper*. Our Saints changed, as well as they could, this last supper into a repast of charity. The hall in which it was taken was crowded with people, to whom the martyrs occasionally addressed the word. Sometimes, they spoke energetically, threatening them with the anger of God;

again, they showed them their own happiness in dying for the name of Jesus Christ; at other times, they reproached them with yielding to a brutal curiosity. "What!" said Saturus, "will it not be enough for you to see us to-morrow at your ease? To-day you pretend to take pity on us, and to-morrow you will clap your hands at our death. Study our faces well now, that you may recognise us on the dreadful day when all men shall be judged."

These words, uttered with that firmness of tone which Faith alone can give, struck many of their souls with astonishment. Some withdrew full of fear; several remained to be instructed, and believed in Jesus Christ.

At length, the day that would illumine the victory of our generous athletes having come, they were brought forth from the prison to go to the amphitheatre. Joy was painted on their faces: it shone in their words and in their whole bearing. Perpetua walked last. The calmness of her soul appeared in her very steps. She kept her eyes modestly cast down, to hide from the spectators the brightness of her looks. As for Felicitas, she could not express the joy that she experienced to find herself as well able as the others to contend with beasts. When they reached the gate of the amphitheatre, they were offered, according to custom, the ornaments of such as should appear at this spectacle: namely, for men, a red cloak, which was the habit of the priests of Saturn; and, for women, a little head-band, which was the symbol of the priestesses of Ceres. The martyrs would not wear the livery of heathenism.

Perpetua began to sing, as being already sure of a triumph. Revocatus, Saturninus, and Saturus threatened the people with the judgments of God. When they came opposite the balcony, from which Hilarian presided over the amusements, they cried out to him, "You judge us in this world, but God will judge us in the next." The people, enraged at such boldness, asked that they might first pass under the lash. Our Saints rejoiced to be treated as their Divine Master, Jesus Christ, had been treated.[1]

This God of goodness, who said, *Ask and you shall receive*, heard the prayer of our martyrs. One day, as they were conversing together on the various tortures to which Christians were subjected, some wished to die in one way, some in another. Saturninus expressed a desire to be exposed to all the beasts in the amphitheatre, that he might multiply victories by multiplying contests.

[1] *Pro ordine venatorum*, say the Acts. The name *venatores* was given to those who were armed to fight the beasts. They arranged themselves in two lines, with scourge in hand, and, as the *bestiarii*, or persons condemned to the beasts, passed through, gave each one a stroke. The *bestiarii* were stripped when undergoing this kind of punishment.

He partly obtained what he had desired; for, he and Revocatus, after being a long time assaulted by a leopard, were attacked by a furious bear, which worried them round the theatre, and left them all torn. Saturus dreaded nothing so much as to be exposed to a bear, and would have been glad if a leopard had taken his life at once with its teeth. Meanwhile, a wild boar was let loose on him. But this animal, turning on the overseer that had charge of it, ripped him open with its tusks. Then, going to Saturus, it was content with dragging him a few feet on the sand. He was next brought close to a large bear, which was unwilling to come out from its lodge. Thus Saturus entered and left the battle-field without receiving a single wound.

It was then that, retiring under the porticoes of the amphitheatre, he found an opportunity to speak to Pudens, whom he encouraged to persevere steadfastly in the Faith. "You see," he said, "that the beasts have done me no hurt, as I desired and foretold. Believe therefore firmly in Jesus Christ. I return to the amphitheatre, where a leopard will take away my life with one bite." The matter occurred thus: at the close of the spectacle a leopard sprang on him; with a single bite it made such a large wound, that the blood flowed therefrom in copious streams, and the people cried out, "See! he is baptised a second time."

The martyr, turning his last looks to Pudens, said, "Farewell, my dear friend; be mindful of my Faith; and let my sufferings, instead of grieving you, serve only to encourage you." He then asked Pudens for the ring on his finger. The martyr, dipping it in his blood, returned it with these words: "Receive it as a pledge of our friendship; wear it for the love of me; and let the blood with which it is reddened put you in mind of that which I shed for Jesus Christ." After this the holy martyr was carried to the place where those who had not died of their wounds were finally despatched.

In the meantime, the devil, bursting with rage to see the weaker sex about to gain a signal victory, had secured that, contrary to custom, a wild cow should be chosen to contend with Perpetua and Felicitas. The two saints were therefore stripped, and placed in a net to be exposed to this furious beast. At this sad sight, the people were seized with horror and pity, seeing the one so delicate, and the other just after her confinement They were taken aside, and covered with loose garments. The cow, attacking Perpetua first, tossed her into the air, and let her fall on her back. The young martyr, who perceived that her garments were torn, began at once to arrange them, less concerned with soothing her pains than with preventing modesty from being wounded. She then rose

to her feet, and settled her hair, which had been untied, that she might not appear like women in affliction.

Seeing Felicitas, who had been very much hurt by the cow, and who lay stretched on the sand, she ran to her and helped her to rise. The two stood waiting for a new onslaught; but, the people not desiring it, they were led to the gate *Sanavivaria*, which opened on the public place.[1] Perpetua was there received by a catechumen named Rusticus. It was now that this admirable woman awoke as it were from a profound slumber, and asked when she should be exposed to the furious cow. Being told of what had occurred, she would not believe it, until she recognised the catechumen, and saw on her body and clothes the marks of what she had suffered.

"Ah! where was she then," cries out St. Augustine, speaking of this circumstance; "where was she when she was attacked and torn by a furious beast, without feeling any of her wounds, and when, after so rude a combat, she inquired how soon it should begin? What did she see, not to see what everyone else saw? What did she feel, not to feel such cruel pains? By what love, by what trance, by what potion, was she thus transported out of herself, and, as it were, divinely inebriated, so as to seem insensible in a mortal body?"

The saint called for her brother, and said to him, as well as to Rusticus, "Remain steadfast in the Faith, love one another, and be not scandalised at our sufferings."

Meanwhile preparations were going on for the butchery of the martyrs in the *Spoliarium*, whither Saturus had been conveyed. It was, as we have said, the place where those who had not been wholly killed were finally despatched. To enjoy the inhuman spectacle to the utmost, the people asked that they should have their throats cut in the middle of the amphitheatre. The saints arose immediately, embraced one another to seal their martyrdom with a holy kiss of peace, and went where the people desired. They all received their death-stroke without the slightest stir or the least complaint. Saturus was the first crowned, conformably to the vision of St. Perpetua. She herself fell into the hands of an inexperienced gladiator, who caused her to suffer for a long time: she even guided the trembling hand of the executioner to her throat and showed him the place where he ought to strike.

The glorious bodies were carried off by the Faithful. In the fifth century, they rested in the great church of Carthage. Their

[1] There were two gates in amphitheatres: one called *Sanavivaria*, or the gate of living flesh, by which those who had not died in the combat went out the other *Sandapilaria*, or the gate of shrouds, by which those who had breathed their last were removed.

feast, according to St. Augustine, drew a more immense multitude to honour their memory than curiosity had previously drawn to witness their martyrdom. The names of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas were inserted in the Canon of the Mass. What more beautiful names could the Church, our Mother, consecrate to immortality? What more affecting examples could she propose to Christian generations?

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having selected the witnesses of our Faith from all climes and conditions, in order to confound incredulity, and to offer models to all Christians. Grant us the grace to imitate the charity and magnanimity of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will daily reflect on the judgments of God.*

LESSON XV.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (THIRD CENTURY, *continued*).

St. Irenæus. SS. Ferreolus and Ferrutius. Judgment of God on Septimus Severus. Minor Persecution under Maximin: Character of this Prince. Judgment of God on Maximin. Eighth General Persecution under Decius: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Pionius, St. Cyril, and St. Agatha. Judgment of God on Decius. Ninth General Persecution under Valerian: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Laurence and St. Cyprian.

WHILE Carthage was deriving a twofold glory from the birth of Tertullian and the martyrdom of St. Perpetua, Lyons was acquiring a new title to immortality. St. Irenæus, its Bishop, sealed with his blood that Faith which he had defended against heretics.[1] At Besançon, two of his disciples, Ferreolus and Ferrutius, rendered the same testimony to evangelical truth, of which they were the first Apostles in this region, so long fruitful in noble virtues. Their martyrdom took place about the year 210.

[1] The chief work of St. Irenæus is a *Treatise against Heresies*. It was specially directed against the Valentinians.

In the first book, he ridicules the dreams of the Valentinians regarding the genealogy of thirty Æônes. These imaginary beings were inferior deities, said to have been produced by an eternal, invisible god, called *Depth*, whose wife was *Thought*.

In the second, he shows that God alone created the universe, and refutes the system of the Æônes.

In the third, he complains that these heretics, being pressed by Scripture, de its authority, saying that they hold fast to Tradition, and being attacked

Meanwhile Septimus Severus should, like all other persecutors, contribute to the glory of Jesus Christ, by becoming a monument of His terrible justice. The divine hand struck him with a mortal illness in the midst of his conquests. He saw his own son Caracalla attempting, with dagger in hand, to end his days. The stroke failed; but Severus remained a prey to the deepest sadness. Feeling his death approach, he exclaimed, "I have been all that a man can be; but of what avail are honours to me now?" His firmness forsook him. After asking poison in vain, he purposely ate a quantity of uncooked food—and so greedily that he died, in the year 211. Pagan society was in such a disordered state at the time that, during the reign of this emperor alone, that is to say, during the space of fourteen years, there were three thousand persons prosecuted for adultery.

Under the Emperor Caracalla there were also martyrs. It was the same under his first successors. For a time the fire died away; but it soon burst out again with new violence. Maximin, having ascended the throne in the year 235, stirred up a persecution that lasted three years, and was directed chiefly against Bishops and Priests.[1] Pope St. Pontian was swept off in this fearful storm.[2]

by Tradition, they abandon it, appealing to the Scripture alone; while both Scripture and Tradition supply the most powerful weapons against their errors.

In the fourth, he proves the unity of God, and shows that Jesus Christ, when abolishing the ancient sacrifices, substituted for them that of His body and blood, which should be offered up throughout the whole world, according to the prediction of Malachy.

In the fifth, he speaks of our redemption by Jesus Christ, and collects proofs on the resurrection of the body.

St. Epiphanius says of St. Irenæus that he was a most learned and eloquent man, endowed with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Theodoret regards him as the light of Western Gaul.

[1] Omnia fuit, et vidi quia nihil expedit.

[2] For this reason it is not counted among the general persecutions.—Ut capita potius ejus religionis demeterentur instituit. (Bar., t. II, an. 237, n. 5, *Persecutio.*) Sub Maximino localis tantum fuit, non universalis; per tres annos circiter duravit; in sacerdotes solum et clericos decreta. (*Id.*, Tal., v *Persecutio.*)

[3] It is thought that a Christian soldier gave occasion to it, by an action in many respects admirable. When Maximin was proclaimed emperor, the troops were made sensible of his bounty, according to custom. Every soldier should present himself to the new emperor, with a crown of laurel on his head. There was one who appeared with bare head and the crown in his hand. He had already passed on without attracting the attention of the tribune, when the murmurs of his companions caused him to be remarked. The tribune asked him why he did not wear the crown on his head. "Because I am a Christian," replied the soldier, "and my Religion forbids me to wear your crowns." He was stripped of his military dress, and cast into prison.

To form some idea of the number of martyrs at this period, and of the dreadful tortures to which they were subjected, it will be enough to know that Maximin was a monster so cruel that pagan historians name him a Cyclops, a Busiris, a Phalaris, a Tryphon. Rome and the senate, having seen him set out on a distant expedition, offered up public prayers to Heaven that the hated tyrant might never return. News of his unprecedented cruelties was continually arriving: nothing was to be heard throughout the whole city but the sad account of executions commanded by him. Some ne crucified; others he wrapped in the skins of beasts just slain. The former were beaten to death with clubs; the latter thrown to lions and bears. No regard was paid by the monster either to rank or merit. His maxim was that the way to strengthen a throne is to cement it with blood. Never did a more cruel beast tread the earth.[1] His death was worthy of his life. Having learned that the senate had appointed twenty-two persons to rule the republic, he fell into such a rage that he began to roar like a beast, and struck his head against the walls of his room. After calming his vexation a little by wine, he resolved to march on Rome and to take ample revenge; but he was assassinated by his soldiers. This occurred in 238. After him appeared Decius, the author of the eighth general persecution.

"An execrable beast, called Decius, came," says Lactantius, "to ravage the Church. This new Nero, after staining his hands with the murder of his benefactor, took possession of the throne, and turned all his fury against the Christians."[2] Among the generous athletes who suffered for Religion during the persecution of Decius, there is none more illustrious than St. Pionius. This priest, the glory of the Church of Syria, had inherited the spirit of St. Polycarp. He converted a great many idolators, directing to the glory of Jesus Christ his profound knowledge of the truths of Religion, and a talent of speech which he possessed in a high degree. His example was also wonderfully effectual. The paleness of his face, which indicated the austerity of his life, made a deep impression on all who saw him.

He was arrested on Saturday, the 23rd of February, 250, while celebrating the feast of St. Polycarp with Asclepiades and a Christian woman named Sabina. On its vigil, Pionius having fasted with Asclepiades and Sabina, as was usual on the vigils of the feasts of martyrs, he had a vision by which he understood that he should be arrested the next day. The vision was so clear, that he procured three chains, one for himself, one for Sabina, and one for

[1] Capitol., *Herodian.*, l. VII et VIII. [2] *De Mortib. persecutor.*

Asclepiades. They put them round their necks, made the solemn prayer, and partook of the sanctified bread, and some water, that is to say, received the Blessed Eucharist in preparation for martyrdom. A little while afterwards, Polemon, the priest of the idols, arrived with a troop of soldiers.

Do you know, said Polemon, that there is a command of the emperor, directing you to sacrifice to the gods?

Pionius. We know but one command: it is to adore but one God.

Polemon. Follow me, and you shall know whether what I say is true or not.

As they passed along the street, with chains round their necks, the people, who looked on the matter as one of amusement, began to follow them. The crowd increased so much that every available spot was soon occupied: the roofs of the surrounding houses and temples were covered with spectators. The martyrs were in the midst of all this multitude, when Polemon said to them, You would do much better to avoid death, submitting like so many others, and obeying the commands of the emperor. Then Pionius, beginning to speak, demonstrated to the Pagans the vanity of their idols and the divinity of Christianity. He spoke for a long time, and was heard with great attention. The people even wanted to go to the theatre, that they might better hear the martyr's words; but Polemon would not agree to it. He then said to Pionius, If you will not sacrifice, at least enter the temple.

Pionius. It will not be well for the idols if we enter.

Polemon. Is it then impossible to persuade you?

Pionius. Would to God that I could persuade you to become a Christian!

Beware of attempting it, said some of the spectators, in mockery, lest we should be burned alive.

Pionius. It is much worse to be burned after death.

During this controversy, the spectators, perceiving that Sabina was laughing, said to her in a threatening tone, Do you laugh?

Sabina. I laugh, since God wills it, for we are Christians.

The Spectators. You shall suffer what you will not like.

Sabina. The holy God will provide for all that.

Polemon (again addressing Pionius). Obey.

Pionius. If your directions are to persuade or to punish, punish for you cannot persuade, us.

Polemon (offended at such an answer). Sacrifice.

Pionius. No.

Polemon. Why not?

Pionius. Because I am a Christian.

Polemon. What God do you adore?

Pionius. The Almighty God, who made heaven and earth; who made us all; who gives us all things in abundance; whom we know through Jesus Christ, His Word.

Polemon. Sacrifice at least to the emperor.

Pionius. I do not sacrifice to man.

Polemon then interrogated him juridically, having all his answers taken down by a clerk, who wrote on wax. How are you called? he said.

Pionius. I am called a Christian.

Polemon. Of what Church?

Pionius. Of the Catholic Church.

Polemon, leaving Pionius, turned to Sabina. The holy woman had changed her name by the advice of Pionius, lest she should be found out, and should fall again into the hands of her mistress, who was a pagan, and who, under the Emperor Gordian, wishing to make her renounce her Faith, had chained her, and banished her to the mountains, where she had been secretly relieved by the brethren.

Polemon. How are you called?

Sabina. I am called a Christian Theodota.

Polemon. Of what Church?

Sabina. Of the Catholic Church.

Polemon. What God do you adore?

Sabina. The Almighty God, who made heaven and earth, and whom we know through Jesus Christ, His Word.

Polemon (addressing Asclepiades). And you, how are you called?

Asclepiades. I am called a Christian.

Polemon. Of what Church?

Asclepiades. Of the Catholic Church.

Polemon. What God do you adore?

Asclepiades. Jesus Christ.

Polemon. What! Is He another God?

Asclepiades. No: He is the same that they have just confessed.

After this examination, the martyrs were led to prison: the crowd around them was immense. Sabina held Pionius by his coat, to support herself in the crush. Arrived in prison, they all took the generous resolution of not receiving what the Faithful were accustomed to bring to confessors; for Pionius, the holy priest, said, I have never been a burden to anyone—I will not begin now. The guards, who used to receive presents from those who came to see the Christians, provoked on finding that their prisoners

had no attraction for visitors, cast them into a gloomy and loathsome dungeon, to torment them the more. The Saints, as they entered it, began to praise God, and gave the guards those presents which it was usual to make them. The gaoler was surprised at this, and wanted to bring them back to the first place, but they declined to go, saying,—God be praised; we are very well here; we shall have liberty to meditate and to pray day and night.

Many Pagans visited them and endeavoured to move Pionius. It was in vain: they were obliged to admire the wisdom of his answers. After some time Polemon and Theophilus, the master of the horse, came with guards and a great crowd of people, and took the martyrs away. The three cried out aloud, We are Christians! Arrived at the public place, they sat down on the ground, not to enter the temple of the idols; but six soldiers carried Pionius off by main force. He resisted so vigorously that they could scarcely push him in, kicking him on the sides. At length they called for help, and, lifting him in their arms, laid him down before the altar as a victim. Crowns were put on his head, in order to make him share, at least outwardly, in idolatrous practices; but he flung them to the ground and broke them. The other martyrs cried out as he did, We are Christians!

The Pagans, seeing that no impression could be made on the generous confessors, led them back to prison. The people mocked and buffeted them.

A few days afterwards, the proconsul, Quintilian, came to Smyrna, and, having sent for Pionius, said to him, Is it true that you were the teacher of the Christians?

Pionius. I instructed them.

Quintilian. Did you teach them folly?

Pionius. No: piety.

Quintilian. What piety?

Pionius. Piety towards the God who created heaven and earth.

Quintilian. Sacrifice then to our gods.

Pionius. I have learned to adore none but the living God.

Quintilian. We adore all gods. We adore heaven, and those who dwell therein. Why do you look up to heaven?

Pionius. It is not to heaven I look up, but to the God who made heaven.

Quintilian. Who made Him?

Pionius. It is not a subject now to speak of.

Quintilian. You must say that it was Jupiter, with whom are all the gods and goddesses. Sacrifice to this king of heaven and of gods.

Pionius was silent. Then the proconsul had him seized, to put

him to the test. When his tortures were beginning, Quintilian said to him, Sacrifice.

Pionius. No.

Quintilian. Sacrifice, I tell you.

Pionius. No.

Quintilian. What presumption induces you to run to death? Do what I command you.

Pionius. I am not presumptuous, but I fear the eternal God.

The proconsul, seeing him so firm, deliberated for a while with his council. Then, addressing Pionius, he said, Do you persist in your resolution?

Pionius. Yes.

Quintilian. Would you like some more time to deliberate?

Pionius. No.

Quintilian. Since you run to death, you shall be burned alive.

He then called the clerk, who read the following sentence: Pionius, a sacrilegious wretch, having acknowledged himself a Christian, we decree that he shall be burned alive, in order to vindicate the honour of the gods and to strike men with terror.

Pionius went off cheerfully and with a firm step to the place of combat. He laid himself on the pile, and stretched out his hands and feet to be nailed. When everything was ready, the executioner said to him, Return to yourself, and change your mind, and the nails will be taken away. Pionius answered, I have thought well over it. He was then raised up, fastened to a post, around which was heaped a large quantity of wood. The martyr closed his eyes, and the people thought that he was dead; but he was praying. Having ended his prayer, he opened his eyes, looked on the fire with a smile, said *Amen*, and sweetly expired, pronouncing these words: Lord, receive my soul! When the flames of the pile had died out, the Faithful present found his body entire, and as it were in perfect health: the ears soft, the hair on the head, the beard in order, the face all shining. They went away confirmed in the Faith, while the Pagans trembled with remorse of conscience. Asclepiades and Sabina shared in the triumph of Pionius. This occurred at Smyrna, on the 5th of March, in the year of Our Lord 250, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

If, from the foot of this still smoking pile, on which the holy priest of Smyrna has just breathed his last, we turn our eyes towards Cappadocia, we shall behold the flames of another pile consuming a new victim. We have seen a priest die: let us now go to see a child laying down its life generously for our Faith.

Cyril, born at Cæsarea of Cappadocia, was only seven years of age when his father, rooted in idolatry, discovered that he was a

Christian, and banished him from his house, leaving him in want of all things. The governor of the city, as soon as he heard the news, caused the young disciple of the Saviour to be arrested, and tried every means possible to make him adore the false gods. To promises and threats, Cyril opposed an immovable firmness. At length the judge, seeing himself overcome, condemned him to be burned alive. The little martyr heard his sentence with great joy. All the by-standers shed tears; but he said to them, Come rather and sing a joyful canticle round my funeral pile. Oh, if you knew the greatness of the glory that is in store for me! At these words he ran to the pile, and very soon his pure soul fled, like an angel, to the bosom of everlasting rest.

While the devil was being vanquished in Asia by a child, a young virgin was gaining a signal victory over him in Europe. Agatha, the offspring of an illustrious family, the heiress of an immense fortune, the possessor of the rarest accomplishments, had been consecrated to God from her tenderest years. The governor of Sicily had her arrested, and delivered into the hands of a wicked woman, charged to corrupt her virtue. He himself subjected her to an interrogation, during which, as he spoke to her of her nobility, she answered that the highest nobility, the truest liberty, was to be a servant of Jesus Christ. This reply provoked the tyrant, who displayed a special cruelty towards the Saint; but all the violence of the most frightful tortures could not shake her courage.

Sent to prison, covered over with wounds, she addressed this prayer to the God of martyrs: O Lord, my God! Thou hast always protected me from the cradle; Thou alone hast rooted out of my heart the love of the world, and given me the patience necessary to suffer: receive my soul now into Thy hands. Her prayer was scarcely ended, when the Lord received her beautiful soul, and associated it to the choirs of virgins who sing the praises of the Lamb in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Thus God took care to choose what was most weak to triumph over what was most strong, in order to let His power shine forth in all its splendour.

Meanwhile the tyrant, in whose name all these cruelties were exercised, should also contribute to the glory of the God whom He was insulting. Decius had declared war against the Goths. His army, surprised by the enemy, was put to flight. He himself plunged his horse into a deep marsh, where he stuck fast, without anyone being able to find again the horse or the rider. Deprived hereby of the honours of burial, pauperised, and abandoned, as became an enemy of God, he served as food for wild beasts and birds

of prey.' His wretched death happened in the month of October 254.

This persecutor disappeared only to give place to another, perhaps still more cruel. A daring soldier, an impious despot, Valerian, who excited the ninth general persecution, was proclaimed emperor in the year 258. He also rebelled against the Lamb, the Ruler of the world, and poured out streams of Christian blood. Urged on by Macrian, one of his ministers, he issued the most cruel edicts against Christianity, and foolishly flattered himself that he should be able to destroy it, little reckoning that it was the work of the Most High. The more easily to scatter the flock, he first attacked the pastors. The holy Pope, Sixtus II., was arrested the following year. As he was being led to execution, Laurence, his Deacon, followed him with eyes bathed in tears Thinking himself unfortunate, not to have a share in his sufferings, he said, Whither are you going, father, without your son? Whither are you going, holy Pontiff, without your Deacon? Never used you to offer the sacrifice without my serving you at the altar. Wherein have I had the misfortune to displease you? Prove me anew, and see whether you have chosen a Deacon unworthy to dispense the blood of Jesus Christ.

The holy Pope, moved to compassion and tenderness, consoled him thus: I do not abandon you, my son. A greater trial and a more glorious victory are reserved for you, who are in the vigour of youth. As for me, I am spared because of my weakness and great age. You shall follow me in three days.

After speaking to him thus, he charged him to distribute at once among the poor the treasures of which the Church was the guardian, lest they should be borne off by the Pagans. In point of fact, Laurence, as first Deacon of the Roman Church, had care of the treasures of the Church, and of the poor whom she fed. This office presupposed a rare degree of merit.

Full of joy to learn that God should soon call him to Himself, Laurence sought out diligently the widows and orphans who were in need, and distributed among them all the money that he had on hands. He also sold the sacred vessels, and turned the amount to the same use. The Church of Rome had considerable riches at the time. Not only did she provide for the maintenance of her ministers but she supplied food to a great many widows and virgins, besides fifteen hundred poor among the people. A list, containing the names of all these sufferers, was kept by the Bishop or the Archdeacon. The Church of Rome was also in a position to send plentiful alms to distant countries. These riches, and above

[1] Lact., c. iv.

all the magnificence of the sacred vessels, excited the cupidity of the persecutors.[1]

The prefect of Rome determined to secure them. For this purpose he arrested Laurence, and spoke to him thus: You Christians often complain of being treated harshly. To-day there is no question of tortures: I am content to ask you civilly what you can give. I know that your Priests employ golden vessels to make the libations, that they receive the sacred blood in silver chalices, and that, in your nocturnal sacrifices, you light wax tapers upheld by golden candlesticks: give me these treasures which you have concealed, the prince has need of them to recruit his finances.

Laurence answered: True, the Church is rich; and the treasures of the empire are not equal to hers. I will show you a goodly portion of them. I only ask you for a little time to put them in order.

The prefect did not understand of what treasures Laurence spoke. Imagining that his prisoner would put him in possession of great riches, he granted him three days' delay. During this interval, Laurence made his way through the whole city, seeking out the poor who were supported at the expense of the Church. The third day, he gathered together a great number of them. At their head, he placed the blind, with staff in hand, not to fight, but to guide. In the second row, came the lame, of tardy and uneven pace: some, whose knees, were dislocated, dragged their useless legs with difficulty along; others had only wooden legs; others again, reduced to half their former size, seemed rather busts than men. The armless or handless walked next; they made one body with those who were covered with ulcers. All were known to Laurence, and all knew him.[2]

The holy Deacon left the multitude in front of the church, and went away to invite the prefect to come and see the treasures of which he had spoken. Who can describe the astonishment of the eager prefect on seeing, instead of coffers full of gold and silver, a crowd of unfortunate people, many of whom were in a most shocking state to behold? Turning an angry look on the Saint, he asked him for some explanation of a sight so extraordinary, and pressed him to bring forth at once the treasures of the Church.

In the persons of these poor, said Laurence to him, you see the

[1] Euseb., l. VIII, c. xxii.

[2] When one is acquainted with the barbarous manner in which beggars by profession used to treat the abandoned children whom they purposed to send out begging on their account, he will not be at all surprised at the great number of mutilated beings of whom the Church of Rome took care. (See ou *Histoire de la société domestique*, t. I.)

treasures of the Church. As for her pearls and jewels, here they are: see these virgins and widows consecrated to God. The Church, whose crown they are, becomes by them an object well pleasing to Jesus Christ. She has no other riches. You may employ them for the advantage of Rome, the emperor, and yourself.—Thus he exhorted him to redeem his sins by alms, and at the same time acquainted him with the use that is made of the treasures of the Church.

But this carnal man, far from profiting of the instructive and affecting sight presented to him, exclaimed in a transport of rage: Wretch! how dare you sport with me? Is this the way, then, that you insult my axes and my fasces?[1] I know that you desire death; but do not think that you shall die upon the spot. I will prolong your tortures, so as to make your death more painful: you shall die by inches.—Having spoken thus he ordered a gridiron to be made ready, and placed on half-kindled coals.[2] Two of the executioners stripped the holy Deacon of his tunic, and fastened him on this bed, that the fire might penetrate his flesh little by little. Meanwhile, a halo of light began to surround the martyr's head. It was perceived by the Christians, as well as a most agreeable perfume exhaling from his body. This twofold prodigy was concealed from the Pagans.

While material flames, says St. Ambrose, acted on the body of the holy Deacon, the fire of divine love, which consumed his heart with much more activity, deadened the sense of the pains that he was enduring. Nothing could disturb the peace of his soul or the serenity of his countenance. After bearing for a long time the torture chosen by the tyrant, he said calmly, You may turn me now; I am broiled enough on this side. The executioners having turned him, he added (still addressing the judge), My flesh is broiled enough; you may eat. The prefect answered him only with insults.

Meanwhile, the holy martyr, raising his eyes to Heaven, prayed fervently for the conversion of Rome. O Jesus, he exclaimed, the only God, the only Light of the universe! it was Thou that gavest to Rome all the sceptres of the earth. Thou didst so for the sake of Thy Religion, and to unite all peoples in Thy sacred name. May Rome, the capital of the world, submit to the yoke of the Faith, that the Gospel may be spread more easily through all the provinces of the empire! Take away, O Lord, from the fairest city in the

[1] The Roman Magistrates used to be preceded by lictors, who carried axes and fasces, symbolic of power.

[2] This gridiron is still preserved at Rome, in the church of St. Laurence *in Lucina*, and the stone that was covered with coals, in the church of St. Laurence *outside the walls*.

world the foul blot of idolatry; send Thy Angel to make known the true God. Rome already holds the pledges of this hope: the Princes of the Apostles took possession of it in Thy name. I hope, O my God, that Thou alone wilt soon triumph in this city over its emperors and its idols!

His prayer ended, he expired. The holy Deacon became the glory of Rome, as Stephen was that of Jerusalem. Prudence does not hesitate to acknowledge that the entire conversion of Rome was the fruit of the death and the prayers of St. Laurence. God began to hear him even before his soul had quitted this world. Several senators, the witnesses of his piety and courage, were converted on the spot. They afterwards lifted the body of the holy martyr on their shoulders, and buried it honourably in the Veran field, near the road to Tibur[1]—the 10th of August, 258. The death of Laurence was the death of idolatry, which from that time began visibly to decline.

The tomb of the great Archdeacon of Rome had just closed, when another opened at the gates of Carthage to receive the precious body of an illustrious Pontiff. This new martyr, this Bishop, one of the lights of the Church, was St. Cyprian.

His father was one of the chief senators of Carthage. Gifted with rare genius, Cyprian became a professor of eloquence. In this occupation, which was formerly very honourable, he lived conformably to his illustrious birth; and it was only at a mature age that he abandoned the superstitions of Paganism. His virtues, and especially his ardent zeal, soon caused him to be raised to the priesthood and the episcopate. He had been Bishop of Carthage for a few years, when an edict of persecution arrived there. No sooner was it published than the Pagans ran to the market-place, crying out, Cyprian to the lions! Cyprian to the beasts! On the 30th of August, 258, he was arrested, and brought before Paternus the proconsul, who said to him, Our most religious emperors, Valerian and Gallien, have written to me, commanding me to oblige all those who do not follow the religion of the Romans, to embrace it. I have sent for you to ask you for some account of your belief, and of your thoughts regarding the orders of our princes. What is your name? What is your rank?

Cyprian. I am a Christian and a Bishop. I know but the one only God, who made heaven and earth and sea, and all that they contain. This is the God whom we serve, all we Christians Day and night we implore His mercies for ourselves, for all mankind, for the prosperity of the emperors.

[1] At the present day, this is the celebrated catacomb of St. Laurence.

Paternus. Do you persist in this declaration?

Cyprian. When the will is right, and devoted to the Lord, it can never change.

Paternus. I banish you to the city of Curubus.

Cyprian. I go.

Paternus. Tell me: how many Priests are there in this city?

Cyprian. I cannot discover them: the Roman laws punish informers. But you may find them at home.

Paternus. I will find them. I have, moreover, given orders to prevent you from holding your assemblies, and from entering cemeteries. If any one dare to infringe upon these orders, he shall be punished with death.

Cyprian. Do what is commanded you.

Curubus, to which the Saint was banished, was a small town about fifty miles from Carthage. As partners in his exile, he had the deacon Pontius and some other Christians. Galerius Maximus having succeeded Paternus, the Saint was granted leave to return; but he made his abode in a country house that he owned near the city. He had purchased it for the benefit of the poor, when he was baptised. It was in this quiet retreat that he saw two of the proconsul's officers coming to him. The Saint, prepared for all events, received them with a calm and cheerful countenance. The officers, putting him in a chariot, took him to a country seat whither the proconsul had retired for the sake of his health. Galerius postponed the examination till the next day, and the martyr was conveyed to Carthage, there to be kept in the house of the chief officer that had arrested him.

As soon as the rumour spread that Cyprian had been seized, a general panic filled the city, and an immense concourse of people assembled round the house. The officer who guarded Cyprian during the night, had a great respect for him. He even permitted his friends to see him and to sup with him. Next morning, which, according to the account of the deacon Pontius, was one of joy for the holy Bishop, a considerable escort led him to the prætorium. The proconsul Galerius having taken his place on the bench, the Saint was brought into the court.

Galerius. Thascius Cyprian, are you a Christian?

Cyprian. I am.

Galerius. Are you the same that has been bishop and father to these impious men?

Cyprian. Yes, I am bishop of those whom you treat as impious.

Galerius. The most sacred emperors command you to follow the ceremonies of the Roman religion.

Cyprian. I cannot do so

Galerius. Think of yourself and of your life.

Cyprian. Do what is commanded you. The justice of the cause that I defend leaves me not a moment for hesitation.

Galerius, having taken the advice of his council, continued thus: You have now been a long time living in impiety, and engaging a great many wretches to conspire with you against the gods of the empire. Our most sacred emperors, Gallien and Valerian, have failed to bring you back to their worship. Since you are not ashamed to be the chief author of such crimes, you shall serve as an example to those whom you have seduced; and obedience to the laws shall be re-established in your blood. Then, taking the tablets, he wrote the following sentence thereon, and read it aloud: I command that Thascius Cyprian be beheaded. Cyprian answered, God be praised! The Christians present cried out that they would willingly die with their bishop.

When the Saint was taken forth from the prætorium, a band of soldiers surrounded him, and a number of centurions and tribunes marched on each side of him. He was led out into the country, to a large plain, closely set with trees, on which many climbed up to have a sight of him from afar, because of the crowd. Arrived at the place of execution, he laid aside his mantle, which was of a dark colour, fell on his knees, and prayed for some time. He then took off his dalmatic, and gave it to some deacons who had accompanied him, retaining only a linen tunic for himself. On the arrival of the executioner, he ordered twenty-five pieces of gold to be given him. He then fastened a bandage over his eyes, and told Julian, a priest, and another Julian, a sub-deacon, to tie his hands. The brethren spread linens round him to receive his blood. A moment more, and the Saint received the stroke that ended his mortal and began his glorious life. The Faithful carried off his body to a neighbouring field, and buried it during the night with much solemnity.[1] Does it not seem to you that we can hardly tell

[1] The chief works of St. Cyprian are :—

1. A *Letter on the Contempt of the World.*

2. A book *On the Vanity of Idols.*

3. Two books *On Testimony,* in which the Saint collects a number of passages relating to Jesus Christ and the Church.

4. A book *On the Conduct of Virgins.* The Saint sets forth the dignity of their state, and lays down rules for their guidance.

5. A book *On the Unity of the Church.* This is an eloquent demonstration of the necessity of unity in the Church.

6. A book *On the Lapsed.* During the persecution of Decius, there were some falls among the Christians. The Saint begins by describing the crown of martyrs. He then bitterly deplores the misfortune of apostates. He passes on to the remedy, and complains of those who ask a too speedy penance.

7. A book *On the Lord's Prayer.* Herein we find an explanation of all

which ought to be more admired, the firmness of the martyrs, or the courage of other Christians, who were not afraid of losing their lives that they might be permitted to accompany their friends to the scaffold?

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the great examples of virtue that Thou hast given me in the martyrs. Grant me a share in the Charity of St. Laurence and in the Faith of St. Cyprian.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will respect and relieve the poor.*

LESSON XVI.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES.

Judgment of God on Valerian. Persecution under Aurelian: Character of this Prince. Martyrdom of St. Denis. Judgment of God on Aurelian. Tenth General Persecution under Diocletian and Maximian: Character of these Princes. Martyrdom of St. Genesius and the Theban Legion. The Church consoled: Life of St. Paul the Hermit.

Like all other persecutors, Valerian should serve as a monument to the justice of God, and teach all succeeding generations that no one can rebel with impunity against the Lord and His Christ. Having set out for the East to drive back the Persians, who were invading the provinces of the Empire, he was made prisoner in 260. He was taken by King Sapor to Persia, where he was employed as a foot-stool when the latter wished to mount his horse or his chariot. This is a triumph, the Persian king would say to him insultingly, that the Romans will not paint on their walls. To add to the punishment of the persecutor, God was pleased that his son and successor should have no desire to deliver him.

the petitions of the *Pater*, and a note of the hours at which the Early Christians used to pray.

8. A book *On Mortality*. It was composed on the occasion of a plague that desolated Africa. The Saint shows what ought to be the sentiments and the conduct of Christians in times of public calamity.

9. His *Letters*, to the number of eighty-one.

Lactantius says of St. Cyprian that he has all the qualities of the great orator: he knows how to please, to instruct, and to persuade; it can hardly be decided in which of these three talents he excels.

After exposing the Roman name to the scorn of barbarians, Valerian died miserably. Sapor, having caused him to be flayed,[1] commanded his skin to be dressed and dyed red. He then hung it up in a temple as an everlasting monument of Roman disgrace, or rather of divine vengeance. After these dreadful penalties inflicted on the persecutors of Christianity, is it not strange that we still meet with men bold enough to meditate anything against the omnipotent God, who dashes monarchs and peoples to pieces like vessels of clay?

Aurelian, forgetful of these appalling lessons, soon ventured to provoke the divine anger by persecuting the Christians. This emperor, who ascended the throne in 270, was the son of a farmer belonging to the neighbourhood of Sirmium in Illyria. He was one of those brutal and domineering men to whom everything that pride desires is good. Naturally hard and pitiless, he would now and again display a little of that seeming sensibility which self-love puts on for a moment to deceive public opinion, and then abandon himself with greater security to his wicked inclinations. If he was sometimes admired, he was at all times hated.

The cruel edicts of Aurelian had scarcely reached the ends of the Empire, when he himself bedewed the earth with his blood in the neighbourhood of Heraclea. Mnestheus, his secretary, apprehensive of his anger, drew up a forged list of persons proscribed, and showed it to the chief officers of the army: God permitted them to be caught in the snare. They fell on Aurelian, who was thus murdered by his own friends. All these tragic examples were intended by Providence to stay future persecutors; but these blinded men, far from profiting of such wholesome lessons, only became more fierce and obdurate.

The Roman Empire, which for several centuries had been almost continually giving itself to battles with Christianity, made a last effort to destroy it, and, instead of doing so, succeeded in establishing it. With Diocletian began the true era of blood, the true era of martyrs. The whole earth, says Lactantius, was deluged with Christian blood, from East to West.[2] This cruel tyrant, the author of the tenth general persecution, ascended the throne in the year 284.

Diocletian was a soldier of fortune. Of low extraction—born in Dalmatia—he had at an early age chosen a life of arms, and gradually risen to the highest military honours. In the year 286, he shared the Empire with Maximian Hercules. This man, of very

[1] Some authors say that he was flayed alive.
[2] *De mortib. persecut.*, p. 302.

obscure family, had been born in a village of Pannonia. He was a cruel character, addicted to all kinds of vice. A private soldier in the same company as Diocletian, he owed his elevation to his military abilities and the favour of his old comrade.

In 292, these princes, alarmed at the dangers that threatened the Empire on all sides, and despairing of their power to face so many enemies, named each a Cæsar to help them in defending their states. They also desired by this measure to provide successors for themselves. Diocletian named Maximus Galerius for the East, and Maximian, Constantius Chlorus for the West. Galerius was a peasant of Dacia, enlisted in the Roman army. Everything in him bespoke a fierce and barbarous nature. His look, his voice, his gait, struck the beholder with fear He was, moreover, zealous even to fanaticism for the interests of idolatry. Constantius Chlorus was of an illustrious family, and united in his person all those qualities which make princes great.

So many emperors were the ruin of the Empire. On the one hand, each of them wishing to have as many officers and soldiers as his colleagues, it was necessary to add considerably to the taxes. On the other, the edicts issued against the Christians by preceding emperors continued to be put in force, and thousands of virtuous men, the true support of the State, were inhumanly sacrificed. Their death, by weakening the Empire and crying to Heaven for vengeance, facilitated, and, as it were, solicited the approaching invasion of the barbarians.

To enlighten the persecutors, God, ever full of mercy, was pleased to work before their eyes some of the most splendid miracles. Such a one, in particular, was the conversion of St. Genesius.

In the year 286, there was at Rome a comedian named Genesius, who was one of the emperor's actors. A voice of great sweetness and compass, a singular geniality of disposition, and, above all, an amazing quickness in seizing on the ridiculous, joined with a thorough knowledge of his art, made Genesius the idol of the Romans. When he was to appear on the stage, all Rome rushed to the theatre. Diocletian having come to the capital, he was received with the utmost pomp. Among the entertainments prepared for him, those of the theatre were not forgotten. Genesius, who was aware of the hatred of the prince against the Christians, judged rightly that a piece in which the mysteries of their Religion would be mocked should be exceedingly pleasing to him. He chose the ceremonies of Baptism as fitting material for his buffoonery. He knew something of our sacred rites, having heard them spoken of by a few persons professing Christianity.

[1] Lact., *de Mortib. persecut.*, p. 303

Genesius made his appearance in the theatre accordingly, laid on a bed, pretending to be sick. As an opening of the scene, he cried out, Ah! my friends, I feel a dreadful load on my stomach; I shall die unless you bring me some relief. What do you want? asked the other comedians; would you like us to give you a planing, in order to lighten you? The people laughed at these flashes of silly wit. You have no sense, replied Genesius; I see that my last hour is come, and I will die a Christian. And why? asked the actors. That at my death, said Genesius, God may receive me into His paradise as a forsaker of your gods.

Then came forward two actors, one representing a priest and the other an exorcist. Taking their place beside the pillow of the pretended sick man, they said to him, Why, son, did you send for us? Genesius, suddenly changed by a miracle of grace, answered, no longer jokingly, but seriously, Because I desire to receive the grace of Jesus Christ, to be regenerated, to be delivered from my sins. The ceremony of baptism took place, but all the while in mere play on the part of the actors, who were mimicking the ministers of the Church. The neophyte was clothed in a white robe. Then other actors dressed as soldiers, saying that they had been sent by the prefect of Rome, seized Genesius, made show of maltreating him, and led him off to be interrogated by the emperor in the same manner as the Christians. Diocletian and all the other spectators laughed heartily on seeing the plot of the play so true to life. To carry on the amusement, the emperor all of a sudden pretended to be very angry, and asked Genesius impatiently, Are you a Christian?

Genesius replied in these terms: Sire, and all you others here present—philosophers, senators, citizens—lend an ear to my words. Heretofore, I had such a hatred of Christians that I could not even listen to their name without being struck with horror. I detested those among my relatives who professed this religion. I became acquainted with the mysteries and the rites of Christianity solely to scoff at them and to teach others to do the same. But the moment that the water of baptism touched my body, and that I answered sincerely that I believed the articles on which I was questioned, I saw above my head a troop of Angels shining with light, who read out of a book all the sins that I had committed from my childhood Then, having plunged the book into the water, from which I had not yet departed, they showed it to me whiter than snow, and without a trace of writing on it. Do you, then, O mighty emperor, and you, O Romans, who listen to me, you who ridicule the mysteries of Christianity, believe with me that Jesus Christ is the true God, that He is the Light and the Truth,

and that through Him alone you can obtain the forgiveness of your sins![1]

It may easily be understood that a thunderbolt falling in the midst of the theatre would have amazed all these Pagans less than the speech delivered by Genesius. Diocletian, in a rage, ordered him to be cruelly flogged, after which he handed him over to Plautius, the prefect of the prætorium, to compel him to sacrifice. Genesius, having been stretched on a rack, had his sides torn with iron hooks and burned with flaming torches During all these tortures, he displayed an admirable patience, and kept continually repeating these words: There is no other Lord of the universe besides Him whom I have had the happiness of seeing. I adore Him; I acknowledge Him as my God; I will continue to hold fast to Him, though I should suffer a thousand deaths! All my grief is to have offended Him by so many crimes, and to have been so late in knowing Him. The judge, despairing of a victory over his constancy, condemned him to be beheaded: this was on the 25th of August, 286.

A player converted on the stage, and called from the theatre to the glory of martyrdom, exhibited in the brightest colours the power of the grace of Jesus Christ and the extent of His mercy. It is by these traits that we recognise the God who, in the twinkling of an eye, could change a Publican into an Apostle. The martyrdom of the Theban Legion will set before us a new monument of His miraculous power.

The emperor Maximian Hercules, Diocletian's colleague, had marched against the Bagaudes, a people consisting chiefly of Gaulish peasants. His army included the Theban Legion, afterwards so famous. It would seem that this Legion was so called because it had been raised in Thebaid, or Upper Egypt, a place inhabited by many excellent Christians. The Legion was wholly Christian. Its soldiers were men of tried valour, most of whom had grown old in the profession of arms. The name of its commander was Maurice. After crossing the Alps, Maximian allowed his army a few days rest, that it might recover from the fatigue of such a painful journey. They halted at Octodurum, which in those days was a considerable town, built on the Rhone, above the Lake of Geneva: it is at present the town of Martigny, in Valais.

The whole army having received a command to offer sacrifice

[1] This baptism, administered on the stage, was not a Sacrament, for want of a serious intention to do what the Church does. It was supplied for in Genesius by a desire thereof, accompanied with true contrition, as well as by martyrdom.

to the gods for the success of their expedition, the Theban Legion moved off to the neighbourhood of Agaunus, about nine miles from Octodurum. The town for which they took their departure was situated in a deep valley, in the midst of the Alps, whose peaks crowned it on all sides. As soon as the emperor heard of what the Legion had done, he sent them orders to return at once to the camp, and to join the main body of the army in the oblation. The Legion refused to take any part in such a sacrilegious ceremony. Enraged at this resistance, Maximian commanded the Legion to be decimated. The soldiers on whom the lot fell were put to death. The rest of the Legion continued immovable; and on all sides might these brave warriors be seen exhorting one another to die manfully rather than break the oath by which they had bound themselves to the King of Heaven on the day of their Baptism.

The first decimation was followed by a second, which produced no new effect. All those still alive cried out that they would never obey. Maurice, Exuperius, and Candidus, their principal officers, contributed not a little to maintain them in their excellent sentiments. The cruel emperor informed the Legion that, if they did not submit, they should die to the last man. These generous soldiers, encouraged by their officers, sent this noble and firm reply to Maximian:—We are your soldiers, but we are also the servants of the true God. We receive our pay from you, but we hold our life from God. We are not permitted to obey our emperor, when our God forbids us to do so: and our God is yours. Command us things, sire, that are not contrary to His law, and our conduct in the past will answer you for our conduct in the future. We swore to God before we swore to you: would you not distrust our second oath, if we broke our first? We have witnessed the massacre of our companions without a sigh, and we have rejoiced at their happiness in dying for their religion. The extremity to which we are reduced cannot suggest to us the least idea of a mutiny. We have arms in our hands, but we will offer no resistance; for we would rather die innocent than live guilty.

The Theban Legion consisted of about ten thousand well-provided men, who had it in their power to sell their lives dearly; but our ancestors knew that, while rendering to God what is God's, we must also render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and they showed more courage in meeting death for the one than in gaining victories for the other. Maximian, despairing of effecting any change in their resolution, surrounded them with his army. Far from making any struggle, they all laid down their weapons, and quietly let themselves be slaughtered. Not a single one of them changed his mind, and

in a little while the ground was covered with dead bodies and flowing with streams of blood.

While the army were plundering those whom they had just massacred, there arrived a veteran soldier, named Victor, not belonging to the same corps. Full of indignation, he would not share in their ferocious joy, and retired. He was asked if he was a Christian. On replying in the affirmative, the soldiers attacked and killed him. Ursus and Victor, two others belonging to the Theban Legion, were also absent at the time of the execution, but were martyred at Solodora, or Soleure, where their relics are still preserved. Thus perished this *Happy Legion*. Its example teaches succeeding ages to form a true idea of courage. The Christian hero loves his enemies. Rather than rebel he endures the most severe trials, and no sacrifice appears to him too great for the defence of his virtue.

Hitherto, Diocletian and his colleagues had only been putting in force the edicts of preceding persecutors. The hour was drawing near when their names should be added to those of the other tyrants who, for three centuries, armed the pagan world against the Infant Church. This new war will be more fierce than all the rest: it is to be the last effort of expiring Paganism. Beloved Spouse of the Man-God! forget thy sorrows: the Heavenly Bridegroom hath victory in store for thee. It is time to bring to light the action of Providence on thine immortal destinies, and to develop one of the most beautiful figures of the Old Testament that should be accomplished in thee.

We still remember that when the people of Israel were travelling through the desert to reach the Promised Land, the children of Amalec opposed their passage with a formidable host. A great battle became inevitable: it should be decided the next day. At dawn Moses leaves the camp of Israel, and makes his way to the top of a neighbouring mountain. Here he raises his heart and hands to Heaven, imploring victory for his people. The battle begins. To show that success depends on the prayer of Moses, the Lord permits the Israelites to have the advantage as long as His servant addresses Him with hands uplifted to Heaven, but that they should lose ground as soon as he lets them fall. So true it is that human events are often determined by the prayers of the friends of God! This belief is as old as the world. All peoples have prayed for the obtaining of temporal favours, as well as for the averting of temporal calamities. Therefore, all peoples have believed in the influence of prayer on human events.

See the Pagans, if going to war! Before the departure of the army, the temples of the gods are solemnly visited, vows and

prayers are made, sacrifices are offered up, in order to implore victory. Has it been won? The arches of the temples are hung with trophies, which are attributed to the favour of Heaven. In public calamities, in sicknesses, in dangers, prayer ascends from the altar with the smoke of incense. Undoubtedly it was wrong of the Pagans to refer to their gods the favours on account of which they rejoiced; but their conduct is no less a proof of the invariable belief of mankind regarding the influence of prayer on the events of this world. The monuments of history assure us of the same. Whence could such a belief have come, if not from that primitive revelation which teaches us that the world is ruled by a Providence, free in its decrees, and able to suspend or to modify its laws that it may reward or punish the inhabitants of the earth?

The sacred records are full of facts, proving the same truth. The children in the furnace; Judith, and the inhabitants of Bethulia; the Christians of Jerusalem praying for Peter, Herod's prisoner; Paul in the ship endangered by the storm: all these instances, and many others, will ever proclaim the belief of men and the efficacy of prayer. So deeply rooted is this fundamental dogma in the human heart, that we find it among the most degraded tribes of America and Africa. Who has not heard of the war-feasts of savages, and the immolation of human victims in Darfour, whether to obtain a victory or to invoke the blessings of Heaven on the crops?

To return to our subject. At the very moment when the great battle between Paganism and Christianity was about to begin; at the moment when the Empire resounded from end to end with the fierce cry, "The Christians to the lions;" at the moment when thousands of young children and weak women were about to go down to the thirsty sand of the amphitheatre or up to the red floor of the scaffold, God summoned to the holy mountains of Thebaid many wonderful men, each a new Moses. From the depths of their solitude, Paul and Antony, and their numerous disciples, will raise to Heaven their suppliant hands and voices, asking mercy and courage. Mercy for their persecutors, courage for their brethren: and the voice of virtue will obtain pardon for tyrants, fortitude for the martyrs, and a Constantine for the Church!

It is time to acquaint you with the leaders of this select troop, this holy colony of the desert, appointed to do violence to Heaven.

Paul, the first hermit, was born in Lower Thebaid, Egypt, in the year 229. He was only fifteen years old when he lost his father and mother. The dispositions of his heart corresponded with the talents of his mind. From his tenderest years, he was always to be seen gentle modest, fearing God. In the time of the perse-

cution of Decius, he fled to the desert. After a long journey, he reached the foot of an immense rock with many caves, one of which he chose as his abode. Not far from this cave was a fountain, whose water served him as drink. A large palm-tree, covered with leaves and fruit, supplied him with raiment and food. Paul was only twenty-two years of age when he entered the desert. His first intention was to let the storm of persecution blow over, and then to return to the society of men; but the Lord had other views in regard to His servant. To attach the new Moses to the holy mountain, He let him find an ineffable sweetness in a penitent and contemplative life. Faithful to grace, Paul took the resolution never to re-enter the world, but to consecrate his life to prayer for those who dwelt therein.

He lived till the age of forty-three years on the fruit of his palm-tree alone. The rest of his life he was miraculously fed, like the prophet Elias, by a raven, which daily brought him half a loaf of bread. What did the patriarch of the desert do, during the ninety years that he spent in solitude, alone with God; a stranger to everything—to the progress of Religion, to the revolutions of states, and even to the lapse of time; hardly knowing the things that he could not absolutely avoid—the sky that covered him, the earth that bore him, the air that he breathed, the water that he drank, the miraculous bread that he ate? He prayed; he made atonement; he contemplated, adored, loved God: in a word, he did all that heaven and earth, angels and men, ought continually to do—he did the will of God.

Meanwhile, God was pleased to reveal to the world this marvellous existence. Let us tell how the affair came to pass. The great St. Antony, ninety years old, was tempted with vain glory. He imagined that no one living had served God so long as he, in total separation from the world. While occupied with this thought, God sent him a dream, in which He undeceived him, and told him to go and search for a servant of His who dwelt in the depths of the desert. After travelling two days and two nights, the saint perceived a light, which revealed the abode of him whom he was seeking. He draws near, and, after many entreaties, prevails on the saint inside to open the door. Paul receives him with a sweet smile. The two old men embrace, and, enlightened from on high, address each other by their names.

They sit down, and Paul says to Antony, Behold the man whom you have sought with so much fatigue, whose body is worn out with age, and whose head is covered with gray hairs: the man who is on the point of being reduced to ashes! But, since nothing is difficult to charity, tell me, I pray, how is the world

going on? Are there any new buildings rising in the old cities? Who is now reigning? Are there any men still so blind as to adore idols?—During this innocent conversation, the raven arrives, and perches on a branch of the great palm-tree. Then, flying gently to the ground, it lays before the two patriarchs a whole loaf. Its commission fulfilled, the bird takes wing and disappears.—See, says Paul, how our Good Master sends us a dinner! For sixty years I have daily received by the same messenger half a loaf; but, as you have come to see me, Jesus Christ has doubled the provision for His servants.

They immediately return thanks to God, saying their *Benedicite*, and go to seat themselves beside the spring. Then ensues a contest of courtesy, a struggle of humility. Each wishes that the other should have the honour of breaking the bread: Paul insists upon the laws of hospitality; Antony refuses because of the patriarch's advanced age. At length they agree that each, taking hold of the loaf and drawing it towards himself, should keep the part remaining in his hands. After eating, they refresh themselves with the clear water of the fountain, say their grace, and spend the night in prayer.

Next morning Paul says to Antony, It is now a long time, brother, since I first became aware of your dwelling in the desert, and since God informed me that you would spend, like myself, your life in His service. The hour of my rest is drawing near. Go, if you please, and, to wrap up my body, bring the cloak given you by Bishop Athanasius.—It was not that he cared much to have his body buried, but he wanted to spare Antony the pain of seeing him die, and to show his respect for St. Athanasius, as well as his attachment to the Faith of the Church, for which this great Bishop was then the victim of a most cruel persecution.

The request for the cloak given by St. Athanasius takes St. Antony by surprise: he sees clearly that God alone can have have revealed this matter to the blessed Paul. Instead of prying into the motive of such a request, he thinks only of obeying: he clasps the hand of his venerable friend, and sets off in all haste for his monastery. Two of his disciples run forth to meet him, and say, Father, where have you been so long? I am only a miserable sinner, he replies; I am unworthy to be called a servant of God: I have seen Elias, I have seen John the Baptist—I speak amiss, I have seen Paul in Paradise. Without saying more, he enters his cell, takes the cloak, and departs again forthwith. He hurries, lest he should not be in time for the patriarch's death: his fears are but too well founded. Next morning, at break of day, he sees the soul of the blessed Paul ascending to Heaven amid Angels, Prophets

and Apostles. He falls on his face to the ground, and gives free course to his tears. Then, rising, he continues his journey.

Having reached the cave, he finds the body of the saint kneeling, the head raised, and the hands stretched out towards Heaven. Antony thinks that he is praying, and accordingly begins to pray at his side; but, not hearing him breathe, perceives that he is dead. His only care, therefore, is to render him the last services. Wrapping the body in the cloak of Athanasius, he brings it forth from the cave, and sings hymns and psalms over it, according to the tradition of the Catholic Church.

His embarrassment, however, was very great on considering that he had none of the instruments to dig a grave with. God, in whom he had placed his confidence, came to his aid. At a short distance, he could see two large lions rushing towards him from the heart of the desert, their long manes floating in the air. The Saint, recommending himself to God, kept his ground as quietly as if he had only seen a couple of doves. The terrible beasts lay down near the body of the blessed old man, and, after various demonstrations of affection, began to roar out loudly in testimony of their sorrow. They then tore up the ground with their paws, till they had made a hole large enough to receive a human body. After this, as if they would ask a reward for their labour, they came, shaking their ears and bowing their heads, towards Antony, and began to lick his feet. The Saint understood that they were asking his blessing. Returning thanks to Our Lord for that the very animals should adore His divinity, he said, Lord! without whose will the smallest leaf does not fall in the forest, the smallest bird does not lose its life, give to these lions whatever Thou knowest to be needful for them. Then, making a sign to them with his hand, he commanded them to depart, and the terrible gravediggers went their way.

There is nothing to surprise us in this admirable control of the Saints over creatures. By their eminent virtue, they had recovered a portion of that power with which the first man was honoured. The holier man is, the nearer he approaches to the perfection from which he fell, and the more fully he enters into possession of his ancient prerogatives: it is the promise of the Restorer of all things.[1]

When the lions were gone, Antony lowered the blessed body into the grave, and covered it with earth according to the custom of the Church. He then set out for his monastery, carrying with him the palm-leaf tunic that Paul had platted for himself with his own

[1] Voyez *Discours* d'Arnaud d'Andilly *sur la vie des Pères du désert*, t. I, p. 17, *et suiv.*

hands. He always looked on it as a precious keepsake, and wore it on the solemn festivals of Easter and Pentecost. The death of the blessed Paul, the patriarch of the desert, took place in the year 342.[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having watched with so much care over Thy holy Church. Grant me the courage of the generous soldiers of the Theban Legion, and the interior spirit of St. Paul.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never murmur against my superiors.*

LESSON XVII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FOURTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

Life of St. Antony. Origin of the Religious Life. Life of St. Syncletica, the First Foundress of Convents for Nuns in the East. Providential Mission of the Religious Orders in general, and of the Contemplative Orders in particular. Spiritual Services that they render to society: Prayer, Atonement. Recluses: History of St. Thais. Another Service: the Preservation of the true Spirit of the Gospel.

ST. PAUL, whose life we have just related, was the first anchoret. We call by the name of *anchorets* or *solitaries* those who live alone in separate grottoes or cells, occupied with prayer and manual labour. St. Antony, of whom we are now going to speak, was the father of *cenobites*, that is, of religious who live in community. However, we must go back still further to find the very beginning of the religious state. The religious life lies in human nature: we meet with traces of it from the most remote antiquity, among both Pagans and Jews. To speak only of the latter, we must regard the Nazareans and the sons of the Prophets as figurative religious of the religious of the new covenant.[2] St. John the Baptist is the bond that, in this respect, unites the two Testaments. "As the Apostles were the first priests," remark St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Chrysostom,

[1] Life of St. Paul, by St. Jerome, and Life of St. Antony, by St. Athanasius. For such heroes there was need of such historians.

[2] Filii prophetarum, quos monachos in Veteri Testamento legimus, ædificabant sibi casulas juxta fluenta Jordanis, et turbis urbium derelictis, polenta et herbis ægrestibus victitabant. (S. Hier., *Ep.* iv, *ad Rustic.*)

"so St. John the Baptist was the first monk."[1] The religious orders were born with the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles, do we not see the first Christians living in common, and making a vow to possess nothing of their own?[2] St. Ignatius, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, St. Epiphanius, all the Fathers, tell us of virgins consecrated to the Lord, living in common by the labour of their hands.

Let us return to St. Antony. This new Moses was born in Egypt in the year 251. His parents, both noble and rich, brought him up in the Christian Religion. Becoming an orphan at the age of eighteen years, he was left alone with a young sister, of whom he took care. Six months afterwards, Antony, hearing in a church the words addressed to the young man in the Gospel, *If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; then come, and follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven*,[3] applies them to himself. Scarcely has he left the church, when he abandons to his neighbours about a hundred and forty acres of excellent land, on condition that they will pay the public taxes for himself and his sister. He sells the rest of his goods, and distributes the price among the poor, reserving only what himself and his sister will require for their support.

Some time afterwards, having heard these other words read likewise in an assembly of the Faithful, *Be not solicitous for the morrow*,[4] he rid himself of his movables in favour of the poor, and placed in a convent of virgins his beloved sister, who became the guide of a great many persons of her sex. As for himself, he retired into a desert, where he had to endure the most furious assaults of the devil; but he triumphed over all through prayer, sustained by a lively faith.

The fame of his sanctity soon drew a multitude of people to see him, some for edification, others for the gratification of a vain curiosity. All these visits disturbing the calm of the pious solitary, he made up his mind to bury himself deeper in the desert. After a long journey, he found an old sepulchre, crowded with animals: on the approach of the Saint, they all took to flight. Antony entered, closed the door, and remained for twenty years in this retreat, whither a friend brought him bread twice a year. Even

[1] Noster princeps Elias, noster Elisæus, nostri duces filii prophetarum, qui habitabant in agris et solitudinibus, et faciebant sibi tabernacula prope fluenta Jordanis. (*Id.*, *Epist.* xiii, *apud Paulin.*)—Hujus vitæ auctor Paulus, illustrator Antonius, et ut ad superiora conscendam, princeps Joannes Baptista. (*Id.*, *ad Eustoch. de serv. virg.*)

[2] C. iv; S. Aug., *de Civ Dei*, lib. XVII, c. iv.

[3] *Matt.*, xix

[4] *Matt.*, vi 34.

here the devil was still permitted to attack him. He at first strove to terrify the Saint by horrible noises; but, finding this stratagem useless, he one day beat him so severely that he left him covered with wounds and half dead.

Scarcely had Antony recovered the use of his senses, when, even before rising, he cried out, "Well! here I am, ready for the fight again. No: nothing can separate me from Jesus Christ my Lord."[1] The spirits of darkness immediately accept the challenge. They redouble their efforts: they bellow most fearfully, and assume the most hideous shapes.' He remains immovable, because he has

[1] These frightful apparitions of demons, and the rude assaults to which they subjected not only St. Antony but also St. Hilarion and other solitaries of Thebaid, are attested for us by men whose words are above suspicion. St. Athanasius and St. Jerome, those pillars, those lights of the world, were far from being weak-minded or credulous. Extraordinary as such facts may appear, there is nothing in them that ought to surprise us. It is certain, in the first place, that at the birth of Christianity the devil enjoyed a much greater power than he does now: witness the numerous possessions related in the Gospel and in Ecclesiastical History. It seems equally certain that, of all places, Upper Egypt was inhabited by some of the most terrible of the infernal spirits. As a matter of fact, we read in the History of Tobias that the Archangel Raphael, seizing the devil that had been tormenting Sara, chained him, and confined him in the desert of Upper Egypt: *Tunc Raphael angelus apprehendit dæmonem, et relegavit eum in deserto Superioris Ægypti.* St. Augustine, explaining the manner in which the devils may be bound or unbound, says that these terms simply denote the power of injuring or not injuring men. The Archangel, on the part of the Lord, commanded Sara's devil to withdraw, and to leave this faithful house in peace. He signified to him the revocation of that liberty previously granted him to exercise his cruelty against those approaching Sara. The wicked spirit was banished to Upper Egypt, not to be shut up there in any particular place or prison, but only to exercise his power within the limits of the region marked out for him. For it is God who prescribes to the devils certain bounds in the exercise of their power, whether with regard to time, or with regard to persons, places, and things. He alone can command the devils as their Master. He alone is the Master of our goods and our lives. Neither the devil nor men can take anything from us but what God abandons to them. If He forbids them to touch us, a single hair of our heads is a strong enough barrier against them. (*De Civ. Dei*, lib. XX, c. vii et viii.)

The desert of Upper Egypt, to which the demon who tempted Sara was relegated, is a sterile and uncultivated tract. St. Jerome says that it abounded in serpents and venomous creatures.* These frightful places would have remained in everlasting oblivion, if they had not been sanctified by the abode of a great many holy solitaries, who made them famous and venerable, who changed them into a paradise of delights and a chosen land, in which Jesus Christ displayed the wonders of His omnipotent grace. The devil, who had, as it were, established his empire here, being everywhere else driven out by the virtue of the cross was to be seen penned up and vanquished by the ancient solitaries. This was

* *In Ezech.*, xx

placed his confidence in God. A ray of heavenly light descends immediately on him, and the devils confounded betake themselves to flight. "Where then wert Thou, my Lord and my God?" he cries out; "hadst Thou been here from the beginning of the combat, Thou wouldst have wiped away my tears and calmed my fears." A voice replies, "Antony, I was near thee. I was a witness of thy conflicts; and, because thou hast resisted thy enemies valiantly, I will protect thee during the rest of thy life, and make thy name famous throughout the whole earth." At these words the Saint arose, full of consolation and strength, to testify his gratitude to his Deliverer.

In the course of these doings, Antony resolved to bury himself still deeper in the desert. He therefore crossed the eastern branch of the Nile, and, making his way to the top of a mountain, shut himself up in the ruins of an old castle, where he lived for nearly twenty years wholly separated from society.

Meanwhile, the moment was drawing nigh, when the Christians left in the world should come to blows with Paganism. Everything was ready for the longest and bloodiest war ever waged against the Church: the whole earth should be the prize of the conqueror. Admirable Providence! it is at this very moment that God calls out to the desert a number of new Moseses, to raise their hands to Heaven and to turn the scale of victory. Antony was surprised to see the multitude of Christians who came rapping at his door, and expressing their ardent desire to live under his guidance. Yielding to their petitions, the holy patriarch came down from his mountain about the year 303, and founded the celebrated monastery of Phaium. The same year, and perhaps the same day, Diocletian posted up in the streets of Nicomedia the bloody edict which, published throughout the whole extent of the Empire, should usher in the last general persecution.

The daily food on which Antony lived, in his new kind of life, was six ounces of bread steeped in water, with a little salt: from time to time he added a few dates. It was only in his extreme old age that he used a little oil. He would often pass three or four

the battle-field on which the Antonys, the Pacomiuses, the Macariuses, the Paphnutiuses, and so many others, so often encountered the devil, who, on his side, never showed more fury and obstinacy than in defending this place, in which he had, as it were, entrenched and fortified himself. To such a terrible adversary, it was necessary to oppose vigorous athletes. This is what explains the retreat of our Christian heroes into these celebrated deserts. It is one of those beautiful harmonies which we meet with at every step in the moral as well as in the physical order. Two forces ever contending, and establishing a universal equilibrium, whence results a palpable proof of Providence! (See *Bible de Vence*, t. VIII, p. 266.)

days without any nourishment. A hairshirt served him as a tunic, over which he wore a sheepskin habit, fastened with a girdle. A rush mat was his bed, a stone his pillow. Notwithstanding these great austerities, he was healthy and cheerful. His greatest pleasure was to find time in his cell for prayer and contemplation. He used to spend whole nights in these heavenly exercises, and, the sun rising again above the horizon, he would complain of its return, saying, "What do I want with thy light? Why dost thou come to distract me? Why dost thou rise to deprive me of the brightness of the True Sun?"

What instructions must not such a master have given to his disciples! Here are some of the maxims that he used to repeat continually to them:—

"Let the remembrance of eternity never leave thee. Imagine every morning that thou shalt not live till evening; imagine every evening that thou shalt never see another morning.

"Perform each of thy actions as if it were to be the last of thy life, that is to say, with all the fervour possible.

"Watch carefully against temptations, and manfully resist the attacks of the enemy. The devil is very weak, once we know how to disarm him. He is disarmed by fasting, prayer, humility, good works. It only requires the sign of the cross to scatter all his illusions."

As bees are seen to gather round a hive, so crowds of the Faithful were daily to be seen hurrying to Antony's monastery. New monasteries were soon built in the deserts, situated round the mountain on which stood the old castle so long inhabited by the holy patriarch. The number of solitaries increased to such a degree that, a little after Antony's death, St. Serapion of Arsinoe was superior of ten thousand monks. Those who inhabited the lonely wastes of Memphis and Babylon could hardly be counted.

Of these solitaries, some lived together, others led an anchoretical life apart in caves. We have already said that those who lived in community were called *cenobites;* and those who retired into greater solitude, after having lived a long time in community and there learned to overcome their passions, were called *anchorets* Both bore the general name of *monks,* that is to say, solitaries, or of *hermits,* that is to say, inhabitants of the desert. The cenobites did not fail to be very secluded, since they used never to see any human creatures save their own brethren, being many days' journey away from any habitation, far out in the sandy desert, whither everything should be carried, even water. They only saw one another in the evening and during the night, at the hours of prayer, being occupied the whole day with work in their cells.

St. Athanasius, who often visted them, speaks of them only in transports of admiration. "The monasteries," he says, "are still so many temples, full of persons whose life is spent in singing the praises of God, in reading, in praying, in fasting, in watching: angels of the earth, who place all their hopes in the good things to come, who are united by the bonds of a delightful charity, and who labour less for their own maintenance than for that of the poor. It is like an immense region absolutely cut off from the world, and in which the happy inhabitants have no other concern than to exercise themselves in justice and piety."

All these solitaries were guided by the great St. Antony, who never ceased animating their fervour by his vigilance, his exhortations, and his example; for, though he had appointed minor superiors, he always took care to maintain a general superintendence over them himself. The veneration in which he was held, extended far beyond the limits of the desert. The Emperor Constantine, and his two sons, Constantius and Constans, wrote to him recommending themselves to his prayers, and expressing an earnest desire to receive an answer from him. The disciples of Antony being amazed at the honour done him by the master of the world, he said to them, "You need not be surprised at my receiving a letter from the emperor. It is only one man writing to another. But be amazed that God should have vouchsafed to write His will for us, and to speak to us by the mouth of His own Son." Yielding to the urgent pressure of his disciples, he wrote to the emperor and his children a letter, in which he exhorted them to despise the world and never to lose sight of the Last Judgment.

Antony, seeing himself near the close of his days, undertook a visitation of his monasteries. His chief disciples, to whom he foretold his approaching end, besought him with tears in their eyes to remain with them till his last hour; but he would not agree to it. Returning to his cell, he there fell sick shortly afterwards. As the moment of death drew nigh, he said to his disciples, "When the day of the resurrection comes, I shall receive again this body incorruptible from the hand of Jesus Christ. Divide my garments: give Bishop Athanasius one of my sheepskins, together with the cloak that he presented to me quite new, and that I have been in the habit of wearing; give Bishop Serapion the other sheepskin; and keep my hairshirt for yourselves." Such was the last will of this great man. "Farewell, my children," he added; "Antony is departing, and will no more be with you." When he had thus spoken, Macarius and Amathas embraced him. He stretched out his feet, and calmly slept in the Lord: this occurred in the year 356. He was a hundred and five years old, and, notwithstanding

his great austerities, was subject to none of the infirmities that are the usual portion of old age.[1]

While Antony was summoning to the desert a multitude of men, whose united prayers should do violence to Heaven, a holy woman was forming in the very midst of the world a new Thebaid, by drawing to the religious life a great many others of her sex. So many saints, so many innocent victims, so many hands raised day and night to Heaven, were not too many to obtain the victory on which depended the salvation of the world.

The foundress of the first convents of virgins in the East was St. Syncletica. She was born in Macedonia almost at the same time as St. Antony in Egypt. Her virtuous parents went to reside at Alexandria, drawn by the reputation of sanctity that then made this city so famous. They were of a very old and illustrious line. Their family consisted of four children, two sons and two daughters. The young Syncletica was still in the arms of her father and mother, when she was distinguished by her love for virtue and for all the exercises of religion. A noble origin and a large fortune, joined with great beauty, caused her to be sought in marriage by the first men of the city. She refused them all, because she had promised Jesus Christ to have Him alone for her spouse. As she was convinced that she had no more dangerous enemy than herself, she employed all sorts of mortification to subject the flesh to the spirit.

After the death of her parents, she provided for the wants of a blind sister who was left to her. She next distributed all her goods among the poor. Nothing being able to attach her any longer to the world, she retired into a sepulchre near the city, there to devote herself solely to the contemplation of heavenly things. For some time God alone was the witness of the angelical life led by His servant; but He at length permitted the splendour of her virtues to pierce the darkness in which she had buried herself.

To the abode of the Saint flocked an immense number of Christian wives and maidens, who wished to consult her on matters of piety. The Saint gave them the wisest instructions for overcoming the three great passions of the human heart—the love of honours, the love of riches, and the love of pleasures. Docile under the guidance of the servant of God, the most of them assembled in community, or led the life of the cloister in the world. Such was the origin of convents of nuns in the East. Having reached the age of eighty years, Syncletica was afflicted with the most violent

[1] *Vie des Pères du désert*, par Arnaud d'Andilly, t. 1; Hélyot, *Histoire des ordres relig.*, t. I.

pains. She endured them for three years and a half with admirable patience, and at length surrendered her beautiful soul into the hands of her Creator, after exhorting her daughters to fight out the battle courageously and never to relent.[1]

Thus, in the plan of Providence for the preservation and propagation of Christianity, the religious orders, and especially the contemplative orders, are like so many armies, every member of which is a new Moses, called away from the field of action to obtain for the Church a victory over her enemies—in other words, over persecutions, heresies, and scandals. We must regard them as so many victims selected to make atonement for the iniquities of the world. The great Origen, speaking of the first religious, says in express terms, that they were attached only to the service of God, disengaged from worldly affairs, *charged to fight for the weak*, by prayer, fasting, justice, piety, meekness, chastity, and all other virtues, so that the ordinary Faithful profited much by their labours.[2]

This mission of the contemplative orders may be traced to the very foundation of Christianity. A splendid truth! which it is most important for us to understand, especially at the present day. In effect, Christianity is only a great indulgence, that is to say, the acceptance of a worthy victim offered for the guilty human race. This acceptance supposes the transferability of the merits of the just to the sinner. And the case is really so; for we are all brethren, all sureties one for another. If the good works of the Saints are most powerful in drawing down upon us the blessings of Heaven, the crimes of the wicked are no less so in provoking its vengeance. The proof is easy. See the evils with which the crime of one man has deluged the earth during the last six thousand years! See also the favours which another man, but a God-Man, has merited for us by His sacrifice!

Think again on Sodom and those other infamous cities which the presence of ten just men would have saved. But above all let us hear God Himself. Jerusalem is defiled with crimes, and He is going to deliver it to the Assyrians, that they may destroy it and put all its inhabitants to the sword. One thing alone can stay His wrath and save the city, namely, a just man; yes, a single just man in the scale against thousands of sinners will outweigh them. *Go, prophet*, He says to Jeremias, *walk through all the streets of*

[1] See Hélyot, t. I, p. 81; Arnaud d'Andilly, *Vie des Pères du désert*, t. III, p. 91.

[2] *Homil.* xxiv, *in Numer.*; Hélyot, t. I, p. 26. (See also, on the offering of prayers and penances for others, the very just reflections in Rodriguez. *Christian Perfection*. v. I. c. iii.)

Jerusalem, look about, consider, search everywhere : if you can find Me one just man, I will forgive the city.[1]

"Who will not admire," exclaims St. Jerome on this passage, the esteem in which God holds a just man? He no longer says as heretofore to Abraham, I will forgive the whole city, if I find ten just men in it. He says, If I find even one just man among the countless multitude of sinners, I will forgive them all for his sake. What more is needed to show us the account that ought to be made of good people, and how much they benefit the commonwealth, even when they do nothing but live as good people?"[2]

Hence, one of the reasons that the Saints and theologians adduce to prove that the public ought to maintain religious, when they render no outward services and remain shut up in their cells, is that even in the solitude of their cells, in the stillness of their grottoes, in the silence of their oratories, they render great services to the State. It is for the sake of a small number of good people that God endures so many wicked in the world; it is for the sake of the good grain that He lets the cockle grow till the harvest;[3] what do I say?—it is for the sake of the just that He converts sinners, puts an end to temporal evils, and loads nations with blessings.

That the end of the contemplative orders is to pray for society, and to atone by voluntary penance for the sins of the world, we find proved, not only by the testimony of the Fathers, but also by their own constitutions.[4] It appears with much lustre in a usage retained through many centuries. Let us describe this ancient usage, which the world can never sufficiently admire.

In the *majority of monasteries*[5] there was choice made of the member who was thought most advanced in perfection, and most worthy of being heard by God. With his consent, he was shut up in a cell, there to spend the rest of his days in contemplation and *continual prayer for all the people*. The religious, in their deeply philosophical language, called this the *going forth to the single combat of the desert*. When the day of seclusion was come, the bishop of the diocese or the abbot of the monastery celebrated a Mass for the dead, and chanted the funeral prayers over the recluse. A procession then led him to his cell. Having entered it, the bishop, standing at the door, chanted an admirable preface in which he traced for him all the duties and all the virtues of a Christian Moses charged to pray for the Church. Then the door of the cell

[1] Jer., v, i. [2] S. Hier., *in Jerem.*, c. iv. [3] *Matt.*, xiii, 29.

[4] See the Constitutions of the Carmelites in particular.

[5] The same usage existed in houses of women as of men.

[6] See an account of the ceremonies in St. Greg. of Tours, l. VI, c. xxxix; and in D. Martène, *de Antiq. Eccl. ritib.* Godescard, 5 Feb.

was closed, and the pontiff placed his seal on it. Henceforth, the recluse held no communication with his brethren. His food was conveyed to him by a turning-box; and, if he fell sick, the bishop's seal was removed that relief might be brought to him, but it was never permitted him to leave the place of his seclusion.

What could not be done for the happiness of the world by the expiations and prayers of so many innocent victims? When we reflect that from all points of the earth rose these powerful lightning-conductors against the thunderbolts of the divine justice, need we be surprised at the miracles of grace and sanctity which the history of Christian society presents to us? It was from the depths of the solitary's grotto that the stroke came forth on the sinner in the midst of his disorders, that the voice came forth calling him to be again a docile sheep after his long wanderings. Among many examples that we might cite, we shall content ourselves with relating that of St. Thais. There are few more celebrated in history, and none that better prove the truth which we advance.

About the middle of the fourth century, there lived in Alexandria a famous courtesan, named Thais. She had been brought up in the Christian Religion; but the seeds of grace were crushed within her by libertinism. Her disorders scandalised all Egypt. No one was more afflicted hereby than a holy solitary named Paphnutius. From the depths of his grotto, the venerable old man, with hands raised to Heaven, continually implored by his tears, his macerations, and his prayers, such a powerful grace as would vanquish the sinful woman, and bring her like another Magdalen to the feet of Jesus Christ.

After offering himself so many times as a victim of expiation, Paphnutius consults the Lord, and the Spirit of God inspires him with a pious stratagem to withdraw the sinner from her disorders. He disguises himself in such a way as to be no longer recognised, sets out, and reaches the house of Thais. While at the door, he asks to speak to her in some private apartment. "Why not in my chamber?" answers Thais; "of whom are you afraid? If men, none will enter; if God, it is impossible, wherever a person goes, to avoid His gaze." "What!" replies the old man, "do you know that there is a God?" "Yes," answers Thais; "I know too that there is a paradise for the good, and an everlasting hell for the wicked." "If you know these things," says the anchoret, "how can you sin in presence of Him who will judge you?"

Thais, understanding by these words that he is a man of God, falls in tears at his feet, and says, "Father, command me any penance you please. I trust that God will have mercy on me. I only ask you for three hours; I will then do whatever

you advise me." The holy old man told her the place where she should find him. Thais made in the street a pile of her furniture, her trinkets, and the rest of the wealth that she had acquired by her sins, and set fire to it, inviting the accomplices of her disorders to imitate her sacrifice and her penance. By this act she wished to repair the scandal that she had given, and to show that she renounced not only evil, but everything capable of exciting the passions.

She next goes off to Paphnutius, who leads her to a convent of virgins. Here he shuts her up in a cell, the entrance of which he seals with lead, leaving only a very small window through which to convey her food. "As for you," he says to the sinner, "implore continually the divine mercy." "But, father, what prayer am I to say?" "You are not worthy to pronounce the divine name, since your lips are full of iniquities, nor to raise your hands towards Heaven, since they are defiled with impurities. So be content to turn towards the East,[1] and often to repeat these words: O Thou who hast created me, have pity on me!"

Thais spent three years in this way as a recluse. Then Paphnutius, having compassion on her, begged the solitaries to consult the Lord to know whether she had done sufficient penance. They all spent the night in prayer. In the morning, a holy anchoret, named Paul, said that God had prepared in Heaven a place for the penitent. Paphnutius went accordingly to open her cell, and announced to her that her penance had ended. Thais, fearing the judgments of God, and thinking herself unworthy to be associated with the spouses of Jesus Christ, begged permission to be left as she was in her cell till the close of her days. Paphnutius would not agree to it. "What! father, since my entrance here, I have always had my sins before my eyes, and never ceased to bewail them." "That is the reason," answered Paphnutius, "why God has blotted them out." Having quitted her prison, she lived with the other sisters; but God, satisfied with her sacrifice, withdrew her from the world fifteen days afterwards.

This assuredly is a proof of the truth that the prayers and expiations of the saints are all-powerful in obtaining the salvation of sinners. How many persons who read these lines with indifference, with unbelief, perhaps with contempt, whose father, mother, brother, sister, or other friends, have been or will be indebted for their health, their repose, their salvation, to the prayers of some poor, unknown, despised Carmelite! If they themselves

[1] We have seen that it was the custom of the Early Christians to turn, when praying, towards the east: hence the usage of placing on the eastern side the ..and altar of churches.

be converted, to what will they owe it? To grace, doubtless. But this grace—what will call it down on their heads? Their crimes, or the watches, tears, and prayers of some atoning angel?

Hence, to secure the peace of the world, by turning away the scourges that its crimes, daily repeated, ask from the divine justice; to obtain for those in authority the lights, the firmness, the sanctity, of which they have need; to bring about the perseverance of the just and the conversion of sinners: these are the chief ends of the contemplative orders, and the inestimable services that they render to society. When quitting society, they do not abandon it, they leave it only to become more useful to it. This is the reason why, in all the great battles of the Church, we see some chosen band, some company of those heroes of the Faith, detaching themselves from the army that fights on the plains, and wending their way to the holy mountain, where, by their prayers and their expiations, they may secure victory for their brethren. It is an imitation of the devotedness of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offers Himself to death, because one man must needs die for the salvation of the people.

Another service that the religious orders in general, and the contemplative in particular, render to society is to perpetuate, in all its primitive purity, the observance of the precepts and counsels of the Gospel: that is to say, the practice of that doctrine to which the modern world owes its liberty, its noble institutions, its intellectual and moral superiority over the heathens of former and present times. Is this a trifle? It was the desire to practise the lessons of the Gospel in all their severe simplicity, that gave rise to religious orders.

In the beautiful days of the Infant Church, all Christians, with very few exceptions,[1] full of the Spirit of the Lord, which had just been poured out on them, were truly holy. They might, without a blush, have repeated the admirable saying of St. Blandina: We are Christians, and there is no evil committed amongst us! The most perfect of all the virtues, that which supposes the existence of the others—charity—shone in them with a splendour so pure and bright that the astonished pagans used to cry out, "Behold how the Christians love one another! how they are ready to die for one another!" Happy days! why did ye so soon fade away?

The moment drew nigh when peace should be given to the Church by Constantine, and with peace the dangers of peace. Now it was that the enemy would sow the tares in the well-cultivated field of the Father of the Family. Now, too, it was that an immense

[1] Tertull., *in Nation.*

number of Christian men and women, full of the desire to remain faithful to the Gospel, would be seen seeking outside of society a shelter from corruption. Buried in deserts, far from towns and the turmoils of life, practising in the simplicity of their hearts that Religion which raises man to God, they gave an example of sanctity which has been and ever shall be the admiration of the world. Their example will confound our tepidity, and serve as an everlasting protest against human perversity. In one sense, it was this perversity that occasioned the foundation of the monastic orders: without it, the Christian world would only have been one great monastery.

The rise of the religious orders is therefore a new proof of Providence, and of the care that it takes to preserve in the Church, even to the end of ages, not only purity of doctrine, but also the practice of virtue, according to the true spirit of the Gospel. If we compare the life led by the Early Christians with that of well-ordered religious, we shall see that there is very little difference between them.[1]

[1] At a time when the public mind, prejudiced by false doctrine, becomes more and more hostile to religious congregations, it will not be amiss to place here a few passages from a recent apology for them, made by a man of the world:—

"Among the religious congregations, some propose retirement as their end; others mix with the people, whom they assist, instruct, and console. The religious orders were in the cloister one of the strong Catholic pillars of the middle ages, a point of support to the clergy; the religious congregations have been the mainspring, as it were, of Christianity in its action on civil society. The religious orders had, by their learning, made sure of the foundations of the edifice; the religious congregations are its rich superstructure.

"The clergy, without the religious orders, would have been driven before the winds of the age; the clergy, without the congregations, would have been less able to make the divine power of the religion of Christ felt. The congregations render the Gospel morality palpable; they bring it before the senses of the ignorant; they enable the dull to understand it, and the incredulous to believe it. The Sisters of Charity have, in their turn, placed their fingers in the holes of Christ's wounds to show that Christ is really present, serving them as a Model, inspiring and strengthening them; the clergy hold the cause of which they are the effect. If Christianity is a tree, the Sisters of Charity are its most beautiful, most delicious, most miraculous fruit . . .

"The religious congregations, an expression of Christianity, are no less an expression of one of the wants of our existence. It is not given to all to enter the great social current. There are souls that do not feel a vocation for it, minds that revolt from it, natures that are injured or frightened by contact with the world. There are persons who find situations filled; others so delicately formed that they meet with no response in the world; and others who despair of ever being able to occupy the place to which they feel that they might aspire at a family hearth. There are, in a word, followers of celibacy by vocation, by necessity, and by nature. The clergy take some, but the clergy, by the study required for their state, are an aristocracy in their way.

The Early Christians looked on Religion as of the highest importance, and made everything temporal give place to it. This is what religious do, who are separated from the world that they may attend to the one thing necessary. Such is also the reason why

Beside and around them wander poor sorrow-stricken souls, to whom the world is shut materially or morally, and who seek an outlet. Congregations of women open a door to some; and of men, to others. You complain, sir, that there are 20,000 religious women: we should like to see 25,000 religious men besides on the same conditions, that is to say, rendering to society the same services.

"On the one hand, congregations of men and women supply a want of our nature. On the other, they procure for society the threefold advantage of clearing the most frequented paths, of providing for a considerable number of its members, and lastly of helping a great many weary sufferers to bear their chains.

"Congregations of men and women are so well suited to meet a want of our nature, that they may be for many a preservative against unsatisfied passions, against misery and debauchery. How many, to whom suicide seemed the last resource, might have found in religious associations a secure and tranquil retreat!

"Religious associations are a refuge. They give a profession, and constitute a social power; but they possess in addition a virtue *sui generis*, a special virtue, which is celibacy. Yes, sir, celibacy: without celibacy, no proper attendance in hospitals; without celibacy, hardly any such thing as gratuitous instruction; without celibacy, no perfect charity. In the hospital and the hospice, every non-religious celibate looks with disgust on his monotonous life. Is the reason not evident? What a dreary way to fortune is that of the hospital! On the other side, every married man, except the governor and the physician, who make a display and take their ease there, is very unfit for the service of the hospital or the hospice. The married man consumes double, whatever is done, and takes up too much room. But the Sisters do more than succeed: they find themselves quite at home there. Little by little you see the Brothers following them. It is the place for religious celibates, for those who believe that the way of the hospice leads to Heaven!

"And instruction, sir! I have statistics here before me: they show, as you already know, 10,371 sisters and 2,136 brothers devoted to instruction. This is a proof that education harmonises with celibacy. But I have not said all: there are other educational celibates, with whom marriage would agree as well as with you, and yet they do not marry. Of 40,352 lay female teachers whom we have seen employed in the work of primary education, 23,000, yes, twenty-three thousand—do not imagine that there is a typographical error—are widows or maids! What do you say now, sir? Of this number, 8,860 appear as having never been married, a number almost equal to that of the nuns. Celibacy is so natural to primary instruction, that it concurs to the education of youth in the immense proportion of 36,201 unmarried to 26,658 married persons. Let us now, sir, have a little fair play: tell us on which side are the surest conditions of disinterestedness, of zeal, of gentleness, of piety, of morality—for morality counts in education, especially in that of girls; tell us whether it is on the side of young unmarried female teachers, or rather on the side of the 10,371 teaching sisters to whom you address your insults!

"In fine, celibacy has yet another social advantage, recognised by economists. Strange to say, from the same school that sends forth the enemies of

they are called *religious*, a name common, from the beginning, to all Christians.

The Early Christians prayed and communicated frequently: so do religious. With the latter, as with our ancestors in the Faith, it is usual to have prayers during the night. Is it only, think you, to

priestly celibacy issues an economic party that bewails the increase of population. This party errs: the means which it points out to prevent an increase of population are contrary no less to the moral and material laws that regulate society than to the natural law. An increase of population is in marriage a thing holy and inviolable. To maintain the contrary is to encourage a spirit of selfishness, only too prevalent in our age. To say to us, Be a father as little as possible, is to say to us, Be as rich as possible as soon as possible—live for yourself, for yourself alone. Persons strive thus to lessen the number of consumers while time is increasing the number of producers, who do not listen to economists, and who, moreover, are placed at too great a distance from them to hear them.

"The reduction of the population by celibacy is, on the contrary, perfectly moral, perfectly social, perfectly conformable to the natural law: as we have just established.

"We should be glad if, to those 20,000 religious Sisters, whom you reproach before the Government, which is powerless to interfere, there were added 25,000 teaching brothers, instead of the 2,000 now to be found, spreading themselves through our hospitals and hospices, our elementary schools, our industrial and agricultural schools, which are yet only in their infancy, and with numbers of which the nineteenth century ought to endow France. The 50,000 associates, with whom the religion of the majority, as it is called, would gratify us, joined with the 50,000 members of the clergy, forming, as people say, the wants of worship, would constitute a defalcation of 100,000 individuals devoted to celibacy out of the 33,000,000 inhabitants of France. We could understand a system formed on this plan for the reduction of the population. Let there be, on the one side, 100,000 religious celibates; on the other, let not the population destined for the state of marriage be too eager to enter it: and economists will be satisfied.

"Marriages may be delayed, but on condition that the education of society shall be effected otherwise than by the aid of police and gendarmes. Let the youth of France be better instructed, better trained to morality, and it will prosper in the workshops of towns, where it is nowadays emaciated with precocious vice. In the country, too, where pure innocence is almost as little known, it will be able to reach an age when marriage may be possible without poverty. Let the clergy and the religious associations, the latter even more than the former, maintain a chaste celibacy, and at the same time give to families moral children, and to the state worthy citizens. The task does not belong to them alone, but they ought to have the largest share in it.

"The clergy of France, and charitable and educational associations, are, sir, your enemies: you detest them, you pursue them to death; and this is the reason why I follow you before your readers.

"Hence, I loudly demand your ejection from parliament by your electors. You said at Chartres, Away with the clergy of France! and the electors of Chartres disowned you. You lately exclaimed at the bar, Away with the Sisters of Charity! It is for the electors of Luçon to say in their turn, Away with M. Isambert!"—(*Lettre de M. Martin Doisy à M. Isambert*, 1842.)

mortify nature by disturbing one's rest? Assuredly not: it is to oppose holy watches to the guilty watches of worldly people. The night is in all eyes a bad time—a time of abominable pleasures, of balls, of plays, of conspiracies, of robberies, of murders. A simultaneous expiation should be made as a counterpoise to the iniquities of those hours consecrated to the worship of devils. Pagan antiquity seems to have understood this: was it not the object of the vestals in rising to pray? I do not know whether you are aware that these virginal women rose during the night, and that they had their *matins*, at the foot of the altar, like our religious of strict observance. At all events, you may rely upon it as a point of history.[1]

The Early Christians applied themselves much to the reading of the Holy Scriptures. It is also in communities that this holy exercise is best and longest preserved. Among the Early Christians the names of father and mother, brother and sister, were in use: no others were known. All formed but one family—submissive towards superiors, charitable towards the poor, hospitable towards strangers; touching examples that are still to be met with in monasteries!

But at least it will be said, monks differ from the Early Christians in their dress. What is the good of this outward show which makes them look like the representatives of so many different nationalities, scattered over Christendom? Do they not want to strike the eyes of the public, in order to secure for themselves a share of respect or support? This is what many think, and what some say, because they are unacquainted with antiquity. If anyone takes the trouble to examine the history of the garb worn by religious, he will find it a venerable relic of ancient manners, which they have faithfully retained, while all the rest of the world has changed amazingly.[2] The habit used by religious is only the common garment of the poor of the country and age in which they originated. It is an undying witness to the manners of other days. Far then from regarding it with a foolish smile of contempt, let us rather—seeing at present so many lovers of antiquity—be consistent with ourselves, by respecting whatever reminds us of olden times.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having come to the aid of Thy Church by means of the religious orders. Revive

[1] *Soirées de Saint-Pétersb.*, t. II, 77 et 117.—Non est iniquum nobilissimas virgines ad sacra facienda noctibus excitari, altissimo somno inquinatas rui. (Seneca, *de Provid.*, c. v.)

[2] *Reg. S. Ben.*, c. xxxv; Fleury, *Mœurs des Chrét.*, c. cccxxxix.

in us the spirit of the Gospel, and give us the interior detachment of the early solitaries.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will say some prayers whenever I awake during the night.*

LESSON XVIII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FOURTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

Material Services rendered to Society by the Religious Orders. Edict of Diocletian. Martyrdom of St. Peter, one of the Emperor's Officers. Persecution in Nicomedia. Martyrdom of SS. Cyr and Julitta.

To pray, to expiate, to keep alive the practice of the Gospel in all its primitive purity, to remind all Christians of the sanctity of their ancestors in the Faith: this is the true way to extend Religion, to which modern nations are indebted for their liberty, their intelligence, their excellent institutions, their vast superiority over pagans of former and present times. Here we behold the providential causes of the foundation of the religious orders in general, and of the contemplative orders in particular. After having considered the spiritual services that they render to the world, we must also, to complete their apology, show that they contribute even to the material well-being of society.

1. The religious orders render an inestimable service to society by affording a refuge to a multitude of persons who do not like the world, or whom the world does not like, or who cannot remain in the world without becoming its disgrace and its scourge. All the plants whose endless variety makes up the smiling picture of nature, are not nourished with the same sap, and do not require the same climate or the same culture: some perish where others flourish. So it is with men. We are not to suppose that all are alike born to handle the spade or the musket, and that there is no man of special delicacy, formed for the labour of the mind as another is for the labour of the hands. Let us have no doubts on this matter: we have in the depths of our hearts a thousand reasons for solitude. Some are attracted thereto by a taste for contemplation; others by a certain shyness that makes them delight to dwell within themselves.

She has provided them also for the sad victims of political storms. It is after a great revolution in society that the need of

solitude is most keenly felt. The monastic life began in the East on account of persecutions; in the West, after the irruption of barbarians. It was long a consolation to the human race that there were asylums open for all those who wished to escape the disturbances of those angry periods. Are we to set no value on the calm secured for so many unhappy persons?[1]

The solitude of the cloister is also for that numerous class, including persons of both sexes and of all ages and ranks, who, from a multitude of causes, no longer find their place in society. How many disappointed passions, how many deceived hopes, how many bitter disgusts, how many sharp stings of remorse, daily drag us out of the world!

It was therefore a most excellent and admirable idea to provide these religious houses, in which one might find a shelter from the strokes of fortune and the storms of his own heart. An orphan girl, abandoned by society, at that age when the most cruel snares are laid for innocence, knew at least that there was one refuge where she would be safe. How sweet it was for this poor parentless stranger to hear the name of sister sounding in her ears! What a numerous and peaceful family did not Religion introduce to her! A Heavenly Father opened His house for her, and received her into His arms. If there are places for the health of the body, ah, let religion have also places for the health of the soul, which is much more liable to disease, and whose infirmities are much longer in duration and more difficult to cure![2]

2. The religious orders, and particularly the contemplative orders, are useful to society by giving it good example. All the evils of the world proceed from the three great concupiscences: the love of honours, the love of riches, and the love of pleasures. These are the three great sources whence flow the torrents of iniquities—frauds, murders, &c.,—that destroy fortunes, disturb kingdoms, divide families, poison existence, degrade men. It is certain that the practice of the contrary virtues, such as detachment, obedience, and chastity, must secure to society the greatest amount of happiness that it can enjoy in this life; but how can men be induced to take up the practice of these salutary virtues? There will be no difficulty in admitting that the true and only means to succeed is example: example, of all languages the most eloquent and the most popular! Well, the contemplative orders give this example by the solemn and voluntary contempt that they make profession of entertaining for riches, honours, and pleasures.

[1] Bergier, *Traité de la Relig.*, t. X, p. 4 *et suiv.*
[2] *Génie du Christianisme*, t. III, p. 234

Can you imagine any more eloquent sermon on the contempt of the world than the example of Madame Louisa of France? This princess, born on the steps of the fairest throne in the world, beloved by all around her, in the bloom of youth, suddenly exchanges the palace of kings for the humble cell of the cloister, Versailles for St. Denis, and the robes of a daughter of France for the coarse garments of a Carmelite. I repeat it, in the works of what preacher or philosopher will you find a more eloquent lesson on the contempt of honours, riches, and pleasures? How many other sons and daughters of kings have, thanks to the religious orders, given the same example!

And now, where is the worldly man who, passing by one of those holy houses in which profession is made of trampling under foot all that he esteems, does not sometimes hear an interior voice saying to him, "Within these walls are men like thyself. Like thee, they have all lived in the world. Like thee, many of them have sought after honours and pleasures; more than thou, perhaps, they have enjoyed these vanities. What a difference between their former and their present thoughts! Above all, what a difference between their thoughts and thine, between their conduct and thine! And yet there is no difference between their belief and thine! Immortal like them, thou hast only a day to spend on the earth, and how art thou spending it? And they—how are they spending it? Thou labourest for time; they for eternity: which is right?" Oh, yes! a convent is a great preacher, one that speaks in every language, and always delivers the same lesson, *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* This one lesson, this one sermon, is worth more in remedying the evils of the world, than all the dissertations of philosophers and all the utopian schemes of politicians.

How many times again has not the distant sound of the monastery bell, which, at midnight, calls the religious to the office, disturbed the guilty heart on the watch for evil! A poor convent of Trappists or Carmelites assuredly prevents more crimes than the gaols punish. It is not, therefore, true that contemplative religious are lost to their country. Remark here how unjust the world is in its judgments. Does the rich burgess who spends his life in ease and good cheer, or solely in the care of increasing his wealth, often by means unjust, who makes it his sport to corrupt innocence, who leads only a gross sensual life, contribute much more to the general happiness than a religious whose life is spent in prayer, in fasting, in mental or manual labour? And yet, O world! thou findest nothing to praise in the latter! Is the worldly woman whose time is divided between the toilet, games,

theatres, frivolous reading, detractions, and intrigues, much more useful to society than the nun occupied with prayer, study, and labour, serving her sisters, sometimes consoling her afflicted relatives? And yet, O world! thou still keepest silence! Thou hast not a single word of blame for the former. Why, strange judge! dost thou keep two weights and two measures?

Hence, let us candidly admit that, if there is any efficacious means of checking those furious passions which disturb the world, it is good example. The power and happiness of States do not consist in riches: they consist in morals, and morals are formed by example. It is therefore true that the contemplative orders, which give this salutary example, are eminently useful to society.

3. The religious orders are a source of well-being to society. And first, they offer to a great many persons a means of living honestly, without being a burden to anyone. A person with a small income cannot live alone: bring together twenty or thirty others with the same income, and they can live very comfortably. In the second place, the religious orders consume the produce of the soil on the spot. Now, the very enemies of religious admit that they do not expend their revenues on themselves; that they lead a frugal, modest, mortified life. On the other hand, they are not accused of burying their revenues in the ground, or of transporting them to foreign lands. What, then, becomes of them? Ask the farmers, the servants, the tradesmen, whom they employ; the guests whom they receive; the poor and the sick whom they relieve; and the hospitals to which they attend.

It is therefore true that monasteries do not make the same use of their revenues as opulent worldlings. They do not waste, like so many rich landlords of the present day, the sweat of poor labourers and ploughmen in the luxury and gaiety of the capital, in maintaining a sumptuous equipage, in feeding a host of sluggards, in providing for stewards and managers, in rewarding actors and actresses. This is doubtless considered a misfortune; but at all events they do not ruin the baker, or the butcher, or the tailor: they have plenty of work, and they pay their workpeople. If this is a scandal in such an age as ours, we must acknowledge that it is a very pardonable one. From what we have said, it follows that convents *diffused*—I was going to say *diffuse*, but alas! I speak fifty years too late—abundance through provinces, while they are to-day exhausted.

4. The religious orders give immense alms. History is at hand

[1] See Bergier, *Traité de la Relig.*, t. X, p. 15 *et suiv.*

with its imperishable pages to attest this first fact, and also a second, the selfishness of most seculars who at present hold the public wealth. Of these two facts, so very different, let us examine the consequences. Religion had created in convents a charitable service for all the miseries of mankind: this service cost the State nothing. Houses, revenues, instruction, medicines, male and female servants of the poor, all were gratuitously provided by charity. People were fed, clothed, instructed, consoled, trained: and no one thought of rebelling against the rich or of laying hands on his neighbour's goods.

But it has come to pass that the nations of Europe, set astray by modern paganism, have defamed and suppressed convents, and wickedly seized on their property. What, in reality, have they done? They have stolen the inheritance of the poor. The poor man, cast off to misery and ignorance, complains with a threat. Sympathisers gather round to applaud him, and to urge him on to dispossess *those who have*. Through all Europe rages, like the lava of a volcano, the fire of a savage war between *those who have* and *those who have not:* so much so that society has no resource but to plunge into a sea of blood, or to re-establish the great law of charity, of which the religious orders are a necessary consequence.

The legal tax that weighs on a portion of Europe, and that threatens to extend over the rest, will only precipitate the crisis. From the first moment that a hand was laid on the religious orders, this result was foreseen. Charles V. said that Henry VIII., in destroying the monasteries of England, killed his hen that laid the golden eggs. Charles was not mistaken. Two years after the suppression and spoliation of the convents, Henry VIII. became a bankrupt, and had to part with the fruits of his robberies in order to pay the wages of those who were his accomplices. Under Edward VI., the revenues of the Crown already showed a very considerable falling off. Under Elizabeth, eleven bills had to be passed to meet the wants of the needy, deprived of the alms that the monasteries used to lavish on them. The annual tax for the poor in England, since this period, is known. It has increased the number and the misery of the poor, and it at present absorbs one-sixth of the revenue of landed property. Among us, assignats, the consolidated third, the wasting of many milliards, and, in fine, bankruptcy, have been the happy results of the spoliation of convents![1]

[1] See Cobbett, *Letters on the Protestant Reformation of England*, let. v, and *Europe in* 1848.

Such are, in a few words, the origin and the utility of the contemplative orders. We shall find in the particular history of each of them the development of what we have just said. It is time to leave the solitary mountain, whither we have followed the spiritual combatants who should obtain victory for their brethren, and descend into the plain, where the great battle of expiring Paganism is waged against the Infant Church.

In the year 302, Diocletian passed the winter at Nicomedia. He had Cæsar Galerius with him. This man, consumed with an implacable hatred of Christians, left no stone unturned to bring Diocletian into his own way of thinking: he succeeded. In March of the following year, a few days before Passion Sunday, there appeared an edict ordering that, throughout the whole empire, the churches of the Christians should be rased to their foundations; that a search should be made for all sacred books, so as to have them burned; that all Christians, of whatsoever rank, should be put to the test[1]—that they should be incapacitated from holding any office or dignity—that all lawsuits against them should be admitted, while, on the contrary, no claims of theirs on account of wrongs or debts should be heard—and that they should be deprived of all the rights pertaining to subjects of the empire.[2]

This edict was no sooner posted up than a Christian, a man of respectable position, pulled it down, and tore it to pieces. Arrested shortly afterwards, he was exposed to various tortures; at length he was stretched on a red hot gridiron, where he consummated his sacrifice, displaying to the end an admirable patience. This first edict was followed in the course of a few months by a second, in which it was commanded to arrest Bishops, to load them with chains, and to compel them to make crowns and to sacrifice to idols. A refusal burst forth on all sides, and the city of Nicomedia was deluged with Christian blood.

Yet the hatred that Galerius bore the disciples of Jesus Christ, was not satisfied. To make Diocletian treat them with greater severity, he decided on a plan that reveals all the barbarity of his character. He set fire to the imperial palace. The idolators accused the Christians of having been the authors of this deed, and fell into the most violent fits of rage against them. Such was the result that Galerius had foreseen and desired. It was said that the Christians, leagued with some of the emperor's officers, had intended to burn the two princes in their own palace. Diocletian

[1] The test consisted of various kinds of torture which the accused had to undergo, that they might be made acknowledge the crimes laid to their charge it was sometimes so dreadful that many lost their lives under it.

[2] Euseb., l. VIII.

elieved the report, and had all the members of his household put o a cruel test in his presence, that he might discover the culprits; ut no one could tell who they were, because no one would inform n the henchmen of Galerius.

Fifteen days afterwards, the palace was a second time set fire to. o better success attended the search for its author, who was again alerius. This prince departed the same day from Nicomedia, hough it was then the middle of winter. To hear him, one would uppose that he should never have thought of leaving, if it were ot to avoid being burned by the Christians. The palace was little njured, because the fire was quickly extinguished: the Christians ere again held responsible for the outrage.

Henceforth, the fury of Diocletian knew no bounds: our unfor- unate ancestors felt all the weight of it. The leading officers of he court, who had until then been the masters of the palace and he counsellors of the emperor, became the first victims of the per- ecution. These incomparable men dared to resist four emperors, nd, trampling glory, pleasures, and favours under foot, preferred o them affronts, misery, and even the most cruel death. I shall nly relate here the death of one of these excellent men, in order hat you may judge, by an account of the tortures that he endured, ow the others were treated.

It was at Nicomedia that the illustrious Peter, chief officer of the alace, was brought into the presence of the emperor, and an im- ense crowd of people gathered round to witness the result. When ll the instruments of torture were in readiness, he was commanded o sacrifice to the gods. On his refusal, he was stripped of his lothes, lifted to a considerable height, and let fall on the pave- nent. He was all bruised by this fall, and yet a shower of blows vas discharged on him with clubs, which tore his flesh in a thousand laces. The martyr remained firm in the Faith. Salt and vinegar vere then poured into his wounds, which laid bare his bones. This rightful punishment having failed to shake his constancy, fire was r ought, together with a gridiron, on which he was laid to be o sted, as meat is roasted. By the suggestions of a refined cruelty, r ly a part of his body was done at a time. He was taken off, and h en put on again, in order to prolong the time of his fearful a guish; but it was all useless. Victorious over fire, pain, and y ranny, the martyr expired on his horrible bed, without displaying he least sign of weakness. Thus ended the life of the illustrious 'eter, an officer of the chamber of the emperors.

From the palace the persecution extended over the Church of Nicomedia, of which St. Anthimus was bishop. This saint re- eived the crown of martyrdom, and was accompanied in his

triumph by the priests and other ministers of his Church, who died for the Faith with all that belonged to their family.

The simple Faithful were no more spared than ecclesiastics. A third edict appointed judges in the temples to condemn to death those who should refuse to sacrifice. The resolution was taken to annihilate Christianity throughout the whole earth. This is the reason why altars were dressed up in all the courts of justice, and no one was permitted to claim the protection of the laws, if he had not previously abjured the Christian Religion.[1] The people could not buy or sell, draw water from a fountain or carry it to their houses, grind their wheat, or treat of any business, without having first offered incense to certain idols, placed at the corners of streets, at public fountains, in market-places, &c. Vain efforts of cunning and barbarity! The Faith remained victorious. We cannot find expressions strong enough to describe the courage with which a countless multitude of Christians underwent martyrdom.

Troops of persons were burned, without regard to age or sex. Sometimes ten, at other times twenty, thirty, sixty, eighty men, women, and children, would be thus given over to the most frightful tortures. I who write these lines, says the historian, Eusebius, I have seen perish on a single day by the sword and by fire so great a number that there were many heaps of the dead. The edges of swords, blunted by striking off so many heads, refused to cut, and the tired executioners were often obliged to rest a while that they might take breath. And let no one suppose that these bloody executions were rare, or that they soon came to an end. They were most frequent, extended over the known world, and lasted many years with unabated cruelty.[2]

From Nicomedia, the persecution passed to the provinces of the empire in the East and West. Edicts seemed to follow one another with the rapidity of lightning on a stormy day. The fourth appeared in the beginning of the year 304: it commanded all Christians, of whatsoever rank, to be put to death, if they persisted in their Religion. The governors looked upon it as no small glory to triumph over the constancy of a Christian. To throw Christians to lions, or to cut off their heads, was thought too vulgar a punishment. Hence, they employed all the tortures that could be desired by unbridled passion. They applied themselves to the invention of new ones with much more care and earnestness than to the management of their districts. If they only surpassed their colleagues in barbarity, their ambition was satisfied.[3] All those legions of

[1] Lact., *de Mort. per.*, c. xv. [2] Ibid., l. VIII.
[3] Euseb., l. VIII, c. xii.

Roman proconsuls and magistrates, scattered over the face of the globe, were become so many troops of monsters, thirsting for Christian blood. A few examples will give us an idea of pagan humanity.

Some fastened our ancestors to crosses—the head downwards, and the hands and feet secured with nails—and left them to languish thus for two or three days in inexpressible pain. Others made use of pieces of broken pots, which they stuck into all parts of the body. By the help of a machine, they would bend two strong branches of a tree and bring them close together; then to each of the branches they would bind one of a martyr's legs. Suddenly the branches set free would return to their natural position, and, in doing so, furiously rend in twain the body attached to them. Other Christians, suspended with the head downwards over a slow fire, made of green wood, were suffocated by the smoke. Others had hands, feet, nose, and ears cut off, and were left to die of ensuing mortification. Others had splinters of reeds driven under their nails. A shower of melted lead was poured on a number here; a number there were ripped open, and fire and sword thrust into their bowels. Others had their skin torn off with iron combs. They were thrown headlong into caldrons of boiling pitch. They were shut up in brazen bulls, made red hot. In one, whatever the imagination can conceive most atrocious was employed against women, children, old men, the Prelates and the Faithful, the great and the little.

Sometimes the Pagans, not to have the trouble of tormenting the martyrs one after another, would include them all in one punishment: as occurred in Phrygia. A city of this province was inhabited by Christians alone. Some troops, sent by Diocletian, went and besieged it formally as a hostile city. They threw into it a large quantity of artificial fire, together with lighted torches, which in a few hours reduced it, with all that it contained, to ashes. Men, women, and children—all perished, invoking the name of Jesus Christ, and boldly proclaiming His divinity in the midst of the flames.[1]

Nothing could equal the fury of the Pagans, except perhaps the joy of our ancestors in the midst of their torments and the ardour with which they rushed to martyrdom. Scarcely had the judge pronounced sentence of death on some of them, when others immediately took their places and besieged the tribunal, crying out, "We also are Christians." Young children, tender virgins, weak women, and decrepit old men, beheld without emotion those terrible machines which were ready to tear or

[1] Euseb., l. VIII, c. xv.

grind anyone confessing Jesus Christ. Nothing could be sweeter to their ears than the sentence that condemned them to die for the Saviour. Joy then shone on their faces, and their lips opened in canticles of thanksgiving, which ceased only with their last sigh.[1]

In arming the whole world against the Christians, Diocletian and his worthy colleagues calculated on the total extinction of their name. They were not aware that Christianity is never more triumphant than when it sees its children dying in its defence. Heroic constancy amid tortures is a sensible proof that this Divine Religion raises men above their natural weakness. The finger of God becomes visible, and new conquests are the fruit of this miracle. Of all this, the martyrdom of SS. Cyr and Julitta furnishes us with an illustrious example. Behold the terms in which it is related by Theodorus, Bishop of Iconium, the country of the holy martyrs:—

"You desire me in your letter, most holy father,[2] to acquaint you with the particulars of the death of St. Cyr, and his mother St. Julitta. In my eagerness to give you some marks of the sincere affection which I bear you, I have made diligent inquiries, and addressed myself to various persons of the chief houses of Isaura,[3] so as to procure all the information possible. I have found them quite familiar with all the circumstances of this event. They have been so kind as to narrate them for me, such as they have over and over again heard them from the lords of Lycaonia, near relatives of the Saints. I proceed then to tell you what Marcian, a personage of great probity and a chancellor of the empire,[4] and Zeno, no less illustrious by the honourable position which he holds in the emperor's council than by his wisdom and virtue, have been so good as to communicate to me regarding the noble martyrs, Julitta and her son.

"This lady, whose life was as pure as her death was glorious, was of the blood royal. The most ancient houses of Lycaonia glory in recognising her as their kinswoman, and annually assemble on the day of her feast to celebrate it with a magnificence worthy of a saint and the grand-daughter of kings. The persecution that ravaged the Church under the reign of Diocletian was felt throughout the world. Domitian, who had the control of it, was a man of ferocious character, a man who delighted in shedding Christian blood. This obliged Julitta to leave Iconium with Cyr, her son, only three years of age. She set out for Seleucia, without carrying away any of

[1] Euseb., l. VIII, c. xi.
[2] He writes to a Bishop, one of his friends.
[3] The capital of Isauria.
[4] Under the reign of Justinian.

her great riches, accompanied only by two waiting-maids. But she found that the affairs of the Christians went on still worse at Seleucia than at Iconium, and that Alexander, its governor, was even worse than Domitian. Julitta therefore decided to seek refuge in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia.

"Providence permitted that Alexander should set out from Seleucia on the very same day, and take the same route as Julitta. The Saint was soon recognised and arrested, together with her son, whom she bore in her own arms. Her servants betook themselves to flight and concealment. Alexander, having mounted his tribunal, asked her name, her country, her rank. To all these questions, Julitta only replied, "I am a Christian." The governor, out of himself with rage, commanded her child to be taken from her, and then that she should be thrown down and beaten with ox-sinews.

"With regard to little Cyr, he commanded him to be brought to himself. A more amiable child could not be found. There was a certain air of dignity about him, indicative of his illustrious birth, which, joined with the gentleness and innocence of his tender age, interested all present in his favour. It was only with much difficulty that he could be torn from the arms of his mother, towards whom he stretched out his hands in the most affecting manner. His looks, his cries, and his tears showed all the pain that he felt at the wrong done him. The executioners carried him to the governor, who, taking him by the hand, strove to pacify him. He then put him on his knees, trying frequently to kiss him, smiling, and making a thousand demonstrations of affection. But the child, having his eyes always fixed on his mother, and making a great struggle to be free, pushed off the governor with his little hands, scraped him on the face, kicked him in the stomach, and, in short, defended himself as well as he could with the weak weapons that he had received from nature. When his mother, in the midst of her tortures, cried out, 'I am a Christian,' he repeated immediately, "I am a Christian." The governor was so provoked hereby that, like a wild beast, regardless of an age that ends pity in the hardest hearts, he took hold of the innocent child by one of his feet and flung him to the ground. The little martyr fell on the steps of the tribunal, broke his skull, and died in a bath of his own blood.

"Julitta, a witness of this sight, returned thanks to God for having crowned her son before her. The joy that she displayed, increased the fury of the judge. He commanded her to be stretched on a table, her sides to be torn with iron hooks, and boiling pitch to be poured on her feet. During this fearful torture, one of the officers said to Julitta, 'Sacrifice to the gods.' But Julitta re-

plied in a still louder tone, 'I do not sacrifice to deaf and dumb statues. I adore Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, by whom all things were created. I am impatient to go to my son.' The governor ordered her to be beheaded, and, moreover, that the body of her son should be dragged to the place into which those of criminals were thrown.

"The executioners drew near Julitta to cut off her head. She placed herself on her knees, and having obtained a delay of a few moments, made this prayer: 'I thank thee, O my God! for having been pleased to give my son a place in Thy kingdom. Vouchsafe also, O Lord! to receive therein Thy handmaid, all unworthy as she is of so great a favour. Grant her admission to the nuptial chamber, as Thou didst grant it to the wise virgins, that her heart may for ever bless Thy Father, the Creator and Preserver of all things; that it may also bless Thee, O Lord! and the Holy Ghost.' One of the executioners struck off her head while she was concluding these words.

"Her body was thrown into the same place outside the city as that of her dear child. Next day her two servants came forth from their retreat, and had so much courage as to take away the holy relics of their mistress and young master, which they buried in a field near the city. Under the reign of Constantine, one of these servants, who was still alive, found again the place that contained the precious deposit: the Faithful of the country gathered in crowds to their tomb, in order to implore the protection of the holy martyrs and to glorify the Lord."

SS. Cyr and Julitta are the patrons of the cathedral and diocese of Nevers, as well as of many other churches of France. We are indebted for such of their relics as we possess to St. Amator, Bishop of Auxerre, who, having brought them from Antioch, gave a considerable portion of them to the city of Nevers. The martyrdom of our illustrious Saints occurred in the year 303 or 304, on the 16th of June.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the victory that Thou didst grant to SS. Cyr and Julitta. If their bravery confounds our tepidity, grant that their powerful intercession may at length enable us to overcome our indifference: this is the favour which we ask for ourselves and for all others placed under their protection.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will fly with horror from bad company.*

LESSON XIX.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FOURTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

Martyrdom of St. Phocas, a Gardener. Martyrdom of St. Tarachus, an old Soldier. Martyrdom of St. Agnes. Martyrdom of St. Eulalia.

THE persecution, which had sought its first victims in the palaces of emperors and among the children of kings, soon found its way to the huts of the poor. God so permitted it that Christianity might have in all ranks witnesses, and of all states of society representatives and protectors in Heaven. The interesting history that we are about to trace will be a sensible proof of this truth.

At the time of the martyrdom of SS. Cyr and Julitta, there lived in Sinope, a city of Pontus, a poor gardener named Phocas. He was a man of truly patriarchal simplicity of manners. The cultivation of his little garden enabled him to live, and to give some alms. Thus occupied, however meanly in the eyes of the world, he seemed to realise again the happy state of Adam and Eve in the terrestrial paradise. Of his garden and lowly dwelling he had formed a kind of hospice, which he kept open for the reception of all those whom Providence sent his way. Strangers and travellers who knew not where to lodge, were always sure to meet with hospitality at the house of the holy gardener.

This virtue procured for him the crown of martyrdom. It had made Phocas known to the whole country, and the wicked, naturally suspecting that so charitable a man was a Christian, denounced him to a magistrate. The executioners received an order to put him to death wheresoever they should find him. Arrived at Sinope, they called at the house of Phocas, and asked a lodging. They no more knew him than he knew them; for they did not say a word at first of their object. It was their intention to learn from the people of the neighbourhood who was Phocas and where was his abode. Thus did the innocent lamb come into the midst of a set of wolves, and the guileless dove fall among ravenous vultures.

At length, that courtesy which is usual at table having given rise to confidence between the soldiers and their host, the Saint

asked them who they were and what brought them to Sinope. They were so pleased with his frankness and kindness that they said to him, Will you promise not to tell anyone what we are going to let you know?—I will, said Phocas.—We are looking out for a man named Phocas, whom we have orders to put to death, as soon as we find him. We beg that you will add another favour to the hospitality for which we are indebted to you, by helping us to discover this man.—I know him well, answered the Saint quite calmly; I will undertake to find him. I only ask you for a few hours to do so, and I promise to give you certain tidings of him. In the meanwhile, be so good as to take some rest in my poor house.

The soldiers having withdrawn to go to sleep, the Saint employed the time that remained to him thus: first, in preparing a good meal for his executioners next day; and secondly, in arranging everything for his burial: his soul was ready to appear before God. During the night the Saint dug his grave. Next morning he went to his guests, and said to them with a smile, Well! the bird is in the net: so I promised you. I made such a good search that I found Phocas. You may lay hold of him whenever you please.—Where is he? asked the soldiers eagerly.—He is not far away. He is before you: I am he.

Struck at such an answer, they remained for some time motionless, unable to decide on imbruing their hands in the blood of a man who showed so many virtues, and who had received them into his house with such wonderful cordiality. Phocas encouraged them in the plainest terms, saying that he did not fear death, since it would procure for him the greatest advantages. At length they cut off his head, and his soul was offered to God as a sacrifice of pleasing odour.

Let us go forth from the cabin of the poor man, and direct our steps towards the camps of the Romans. These camps, full of Christians even a century before, will still give us an illustrious example of that noble pride of the Faith which nowadays, alas! is so rare. It is an old soldier that is going to appear before the tribunal of the persecutors: let us go thither ourselves to have a faithful account of his martyrdom and that of his two companions.[1]

Tarachus, a Roman by descent, though born in Isauria, was an

[1] The acts of SS. Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus are to be reckoned among the most precious documents of antiquity. The first three parts contain the interrogatories to which our Saints were subjected at Tarsus, Mopsuestia, and Anazarbus, cities of Cilicia. They are an authentic copy of the proconsular acts, which the Christians bought for two hundred denarii

old soldier of the imperial army. He had retired from the service through a fear of being obliged to do something contrary to his conscience. When arrested, he was sixty-five years old.

Probus, the second of the martyrs, a native of Pamphylia, had abandoned a considerable fortune in order to be able to serve Jesus Christ with greater freedom.

Andronicus, the youngest of the three, belonged to one of the chief families in the city of Ephesus.

They were all three arrested at Pompeiopolis, a city of Cilicia, by the officer Eutolmius Palladius, and led to Tarsus, the capital of the province. On the 21st of June, 304, they appeared before the governor Numerian Maximus, then holding one of his public audiences. The centurion Demetrius, approaching the tribunal, said, My lord, here are three men of the impious sect of the Christians, who have refused to obey the edicts of the emperors.

Maximus—addressing Tarachus first. What is your name?

Tarachus. I am a Christian.

Maximus. Do not speak to me of your impiety: only tell me your name.

Tarachus. I am a Christian.

Maximus—addressing the executioners. Let some of you strike him on the mouth, that he may learn not to answer one thing for another.

Tarachus—after receiving a hard blow. I am telling you my true name. If you want to know that which I received from my parents, I am called Tarachus, and in the army I was called Victor.

Maximus. What is your profession? What is your country?

Tarachus. I am a Roman, but born at Claudiopolis in Isauria. I was a soldier by profession, but I quitted the service because I am a Christian.

from the public notaries. Sending them to their brethren of Iconium, the Christians say, "We got them from the registers of the criminal court of Tarsus, by the interposition of Sebastus, one of the officers of justice in this city, who obtained the communication of them to us by means of a sum of two hundred denarii, which we gave him. You will see therein the beginning and the continuation of the martyrdom of these admirable men, as well as their glorious end, and the miracles which it has pleased God to work by them, for His own glory and our edification. We beseech you to kindly share them with the Faithful of Pisidia and Pamphylia, in order that Our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified, and that everyone may find in this truthful narration a new motive of courage to do battle, under the auspices of the Holy Ghost against the enemies of truth." (D. Ruinart, t. II, p. 93.)

For the fourth part of the acts, we are indebted to three Christians who were eye-witnesses of the martyrdom.

Maximus. You did well: your impiety made you unworthy to bear arms. But how did you quit the service?

Tarachus. I asked my discharge from Publius, my captain, and he granted it to me.

Maximus. Listen! I have pity on your gray hairs. If you obey the orders of the emperor, I will secure his friendship for you. Come: sacrifice to the gods, after the example of the emperors themselves.

Tarachus. The emperors are deceived.

Maximus—to the executioners. Strike him on the mouth for saying that our princes are deceived.

Tarachus. Yes, I repeat it, they are men, and as such they are deceived.

Maximus. Sacrifice to the gods, and renounce your folly.

Tarachus. I cannot renounce the law of God.

Maximus. You blockhead! Is there any other law than that of the emperors?

Tarachus. Yes, there is another; and you transgress it by adoring statues of wood and stone, the works of men's hands.

Maximus. Strike him on the neck, to make him lay aside his obstinacy.

Tarachus. What you call obstinacy is the salvation of my soul, and I will never lay it aside.

Maximus. I will compel you to lay it aside, and will make you wise in spite of yourself.

Tarachus. You can do whatever you like: my body is in your power.

Maximus. Strip him, and beat him with rods.

Tarachus—while being beaten. Now you have found the secret of making me truly wise. The strokes that you give me only strengthen me: they increase my confidence in God and in Jesus Christ.

Maximus. Wretch that you are! how can you say that there is only one God, and yet you have just named two? Did you not give the name of God to a certain person named Christ?

Tarachus. Yes, He is the Son of the Living God. He is the Hope of Christians. It is for Him that we suffer, and by Him that we are saved.

Maximus. Give up this extravagance: come, sacrifice.

Tarachus. I am sixty-six years of age. I have always lived in the knowledge and the love of truth: I cannot abandon it.

The centurion Demetrius, putting on a look of pity, said to him. I am sorry for you; take my advice, and save your life by offering sacrifice.

Tarachus. Keep your advice to yourself, you minister of Satan

Maximus. Put heavy chains on him, and take him away to prison. Bring in the next man.

The centurion Demetrius says, My lord, here he is.

Maximus. What is your name?

Probus. I have two names: the nobler is Christian; the one given me in the world is Probus.

Maximus. What is your country? What is your family?

Probus. My father was of Thrace: I was born at Sida in Pamphylia. My family is not noble; but I am a Christian.

Maximus. You will not ennoble yourself much by that name. Trust me, and sacrifice to the gods: this is a much surer way. For, if you obey, I promise you my friendship and the favour of the emperors.

Probus. All that would be useless to me. I might, by my property, have held a distinguished place in the world, but I renounced everything that I might serve my God.

Maximus. Take off his clothes, and give him a hundred lashes with an ox-sinew.

While the martyr was receiving the lashes, the centurion Demetrius said to him, Have pity on yourself, my friend; see the ground all covered with your blood.

Probus. Do what you like with my body: your torments are most refreshing to me.

Maximus. Is your folly then incurable? What do you expect?

Probus. I am wiser than you, because I do not adore devils.

Maximus. Turn him, and strike him on the stomach.

Probus. O Lord, my God, assist Thy servant!

Maximus. Ask him, at every stroke, where is the God that he invokes.

Probus. He assists me, and He will assist me, for I make so little account of your torments that I do not obey you.

Maximus. Wretch! see how your body is torn, and the ground covered with your blood.

Probus. The more my body suffers for Jesus Christ, the stronger does my soul become.

Maximus. Put chains on his feet and hands, stretch out his legs in the stocks to the fourth hole, and let no person go near him. The third prisoner—where is he?

The centurion Demetrius says, Here, my lord.

Maximus. What is your name?

Andronicus. My name is Christian.

Maximus. Did your ancestors bear that name? Answer properly.

Andronicus. Among men I am called Andronicus.

Maximus. What is your family?

Andronicus. My father is one of the chief inhabitants of Ephesus.

Maximus. Will you trust me? Do not imitate those fools who have gone before you: they have paid dearly for their folly. Adore the gods, and obey the emperors, who are our fathers and our masters.

Andronicus. The devil is your father, when you do his works.

Maximus. Young man, you grow insolent! Do you know that I have tortures ready?

Andronicus. I am not afraid of them.

Maximus. Strip him, bind him, and stretch him on a rack.[1]

The centurion Demetrius now said to the martyr, Obey, my friend, before your body is racked.

Andronicus. I would rather have my body torn in pieces than lose my soul.

Maximus. Sacrifice, or I will condemn you to a cruel death.

Andronicus. I have never sacrificed to devils from my childhood: I will not begin to-day.

Athanasius, the cornicularius, or clerk of the army, said to him, I am old enough to be your father, and I have a right to give you advice; obey the governor.

Andronicus. What an admirable advice, to sacrifice to devils!

Maximus. Wretch! we shall see whether you are insensible to tortures. When you feel them a little, perhaps you will renounce your folly.

Andronicus. Happy folly, to hope in Jesus Christ! It is the wisdom of the world that brings eternal death.

Maximus. Who taught you all this extravagance?

Andronicus. The Word, who gives and preserves our life, and who will one day raise us up from the dead, according to the promise of God.

Maximus. Torture him violently.

Andronicus. I have done no evil, and you torture me like a criminal. I suffer only for the worship that is due to the true God.

Maximus. Do you call it nothing to have trampled under foot

[1] The rack was an instrument of punishment formed of one or more planks fixed on trestles. The martyr was laid on these planks. His hands and feet were drawn out by ropes, which were passed through pulleys and made fast to turning-posts at the ends of the rack. It was easy thus to extend the limbs of the martyr so far as to dislocate or break them. In this state of tension, heavy blows were inflicted on the body.

the orders of our emperors, and to have defied me even on my tribunal? If you had the least sentiment of piety, you would adore the gods of our princes.

Andronicus. It is impiety to abandon the true God in order to adore marble and brass.

Maximus. How dare you say that our princes are guilty of impiety? Let his sides be gored.

Andronicus. I am in your hands: do whatever you like.

Maximus. Put salt into his wounds, and rub his sides with broken tiles.

Andronicus. You have given me great relief.

Maximus. I will make you die little by little.

Andronicus. Your threats cannot terrify me: the spirit which animates me is stronger than that which animates you.

Maximus. Put chains on his feet and neck, and guard him in prison.

So ended the first examination. Vain will be your search through profane history for a scene more dramatic, a picture more perfect. In this picture, you see a judge who, to all the malice of a tyrant of the lowest stamp, adds the ferocity of a tiger, and, standing before him, an old soldier, who answers with military nonchalance; a man, distinguished by his fortune, who retains the most perfect calmness in the midst of torments; and, last of all, a youth, who drives the judge into despair by the wisdom of his replies. By the side of these four figures, there appears in the shade another figure, a hypocritical figure: it is that of the centurion Demetrius, who, under the garb of piety, exhorts the martyrs to a base treachery. This picture, so full of life, we shall find renewed in the second and third examinations.

The governor, setting out from Tarsus for Mopsuestia, another city of Cilicia, had his three chained prisoners brought along with him in his suite. He wanted, perhaps, by this display to terrify the Christians, or to give his inferiors an idea of his power. Be that as it may, he had scarcely reached Mopsuestia when he mounted his tribunal, and, addressing himself to the centurion Demetrius, said, Bring hither those impious men who follow the religion of the Christians.

My lord, replied Demetrius, here they are.

Maximus—addressing Tarachus. I know that old age should be respected, but only when prudence and good sense accompany it. I am inclined to think that you have changed your mind. Come, then, and sacrifice to the gods: I am ready to render to your years and your merits all the honour that is due to them.

Tarachus. I am a Christian, and would to Heaven that you and

the emperors would leave your blindness in order to follow the way that leads to life!

Maximus. Break his jaws with a stone, and tell him to renounce his folly.

Tarachus. This folly is true wisdom.

Maximus. Wretch! you have had all your teeth shattered: save at least what remains. Sacrifice: this is the best thing that you can do.

Tarachus. If I thought so, I should not endure such cruel torture.

Maximus. Strike him again on the mouth, and tell him to answer.

Tarachus. You have broken my teeth, and do you want me to answer?

Maximus. Man, accursed by the gods, I know well how to cure you of your folly.—Bring hot coals, and put his hands into the fire until they are burned.

Tarachus. Is that all? Your fire is only a trifle. The flames that I fear are eternal flames.

Maximus. See! your hands are roasted. Can nothing, then, make you wise? Do sacrifice.

Tarachus. If you have any other tortures, you can try them: I am able to hold out for a long time.

Maximus. Hang him up by the feet, and kindle a smoky fire under his head.

Tarachus. Your fire could not destroy me, and do you imagine that I can be frightened by smoke?

Maximus. Pour vinegar and salt into his nostrils.

Tarachus. Your executioners have deceived you: the vinegar is not strong; the salt is without savour.

Maximus. Mix mustard with them, and rub his nose with the mixture.

Tarachus. Take notice: your executioners are deceiving you. Instead of mustard, they have given me honey.

Maximus. Enough for the present. I will invent new tortures to make you renounce your folly.

Tarachus. You will always find me ready.

Maximus. Take him back to prison, and bring forward another.

Demetrius the centurion led in Probus, who answered in this new examination with the same firmness as in the first. The barbarous Maximus, greatly disconcerted by the presence of mind displayed by the holy martyr, employed the only logic known to vanquished tyrants. One after another, he tried the breaking of

his jaws, the burning of the soles of his feet, the flaying of his shoulders, and the covering of his head with red hot coals.

Andronicus, before passing through the same trials, had to avoid a snare laid for him by the perfidious tyrant. As soon as Maximus entered the hall, he said, Your companions refused at first to obey. We had to employ tortures in order to overcome their obstinacy. At length they gave in, and they will be well rewarded for their obedience. Andronicus answered, Why do you try to deceive me? My companions did not renounce the worship of the true God; and, though they should have done so, I will never be guilty of such impiety. The God whom I adore has clothed me with the armour of Faith. Jesus Christ my Saviour is my strength, so that I do not fear your power, nor that of your masters, nor that of your gods. You may make trial of me.

Maximus ordered him to be bound to stakes and scourged with thongs; next, to have his back rubbed with salt; then to be turned, in order to be beaten on the stomach, and thus to have his former wounds reopened. Here occurred a new scene, which threw the tyrant into a fit of indescribable rage, and filled the spectators with astonishment. Andronicus appeared before all eyes perfectly healed of the wounds that he had received during his first examination. At this sight, Maximus, addressing the keepers of the prison, exclaimed, Traitors that you are! did I not expressly forbid you to let anyone see this man and dress his wounds?

Pegasus the Jailer. I swear by your greatness that no one has seen him or dressed his wounds. He was laden with chains and guarded in the most secluded part of the prison. If you doubt my fidelity, here is my head: I am willing to lay down my life.

Maximus. How is it, then, that no trace can be seen of his wounds?

Pegasus. I have no idea how he has been healed.

Andronicus. Senseless men! do you not know that the Physician who has healed me is as tender as He is mighty? You do not know Him. It is not with powders or herbs that He cures, but by His word alone. He is in Heaven. He is everywhere.

The tyrant, confounded, gave orders that the martyr should be laden with new chains, and taken back to prison.

This gracious governor next set out from Mopsuestia for Anazarbus, another city of his district: again he dragged the holy martyrs with him. Here, a new examination and new tortures! The rack slashed lips, the skin of the head torn off and the head covered with live coals, red hot spits driven into the sides, red hot nails driven into the hands, the eyes picked until deprived of sight: such were the trials of these courageous witnesses of our Faith.

All being useless, Maximus sent for the pontiff Terentianus, who had charge of the public games and shows, in order to arrange with him for making the next day one of amusement. A countless multitude gathered to the amphitheatre, which was situated a mile from the city.

"We had withdrawn to a neighbouring mountain," say the Christians who wrote the remainder of the acts, "watching whatever occurred, and waiting in fear for the close of the day, and the issue of the battle in which our brethren were engaged. Suddenly Maximus commanded his guards to bring forth the Christians condemned to the beasts. Their sufferings had reduced them to such a sad condition that they could no longer stand. They were laid on the shoulders of some porters, who carried them into the amphitheatre. We advanced as far as we could, hiding ourselves behind a quantity of stones that were there. The sight of our brethren in such a sad state made us shed abundant tears. Many of the spectators themselves could not refrain from shedding them.

"No sooner did the martyrs appear than a great silence ensued. The people began to murmur aloud against the barbarity of the governor: a considerable number left the place, and returned to the city. The governor, provoked, sent soldiers to guard all the avenues of the amphitheatre, with instructions to prevent anyone from leaving, and to take a note for him of all who wanted to leave. He ordered a great many beasts to be let loose, but they all stood still at the doors of their lodges, and would do no injury to the holy martyrs.

"Furious at such a sight, Maximus ordered a hundred blows to be given with clubs to the keepers of the beasts, as if to punish them because the lions and tigers were less cruel than himself. He threatened to crucify them if they did not, on the spot, bring forth that one of all their beasts which they thought most ferocious and ravenous. They therefore let out a large bear, which the same day had killed three men The fierce animal walked slowly towards the martyrs, and began to lick the feet of Andronicus. This young hero, who ardently longed to die, leaned his head on the bear, doing everything in his power to excite its anger, but it would not be moved. Maximus, no longer able to control himself, ordered the bear to be killed forthwith at the feet of Andronicus.

"Terentianus, fearing for himself, ordered a furious lioness, which had been made a present to him by the chief sacrificator of Antioch, to be let loose. As soon as it appeared, the spectators turned pale: its roars terrified the most courageous. However, when it came to the martyrs, who were stretched on the sand, it lay down like a suppliant at the feet of Tarachus, and licked them.

Maximus, foaming with rage, caused it to be provoked. The lioness, resuming that fury which it had forgotten only in regard to the holy martyrs, roared out fearfully, broke in pieces a wicket belonging to a door of the amphitheatre, and spread such alarm among the people that cries were to be heard on all sides, 'We are lost; open the lodge for the lioness!' To bring matters to a close, the confectors were called in, and their task of despatching the holy martyrs was speedily accomplished. Night having come, we took up their bodies, and bore them away to a rocky cave in the neighbouring mountains. Marcian, Felix, and Verus retired into this cave, having resolved to spend the remainder of their lives there, that the same tomb which contained the holy relics might one day also cover their bodies.

"May our God be for ever blessed! For the rest, we beg you, our dear brethren, to receive with your usual charity those who carry this letter to you. They are worthy of your care and your esteem, for they are of the number of those who labour under the orders of Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, belong glory and power for ever and ever. Amen."[1]

Wherever the sun goes, it shines upon combats like those which we have just described. Let us follow it from the East to the West. There we shall conclude this short sketch of the tenth general persecution. Two new champions appear before us as the rear-guard of that *Grand Army* of martyrs whose triumphs make the reign of Diocletian memorable. They are two young virgins, scarcely thirteen years of age; both of illustrious birth, both heiresses to large fortunes, both fair and pure as angels, both too weak to bear their chains, and yet astonishing their judges and their executioners by their courage: we allude to Agnes and Eulalia.

Agnes was an ornament to the great city of Rome, which became the scene of her victories. Her wealth and beauty caused her to be sought in marriage by many young men belonging to the oldest families of Rome, especially by Procopius, son of the governor of the city. This young man sent her a rich present. Agnes refused

[1] Such is an abridgment of those famous acts, which all modern critics recognise as original. These same critics have called in question the acts of many other martyrs, on account of seeming either too long, or too full of dialogues, extraordinary tortures, miracles, or sharp language towards judges. Now, the acts of our three Saints combine at once all these characteristics: they are very long, and contain many dialogues, unheard-of tortures, wonderful miracles, most cutting words against the governor. Moreover, their dates are somewhat faulty; and yet no person doubts their authenticity. This shows that the rules laid down by critics, or at least the applications which they make of them, are often very arbitrary, and that nothing is more just than to decline accepting *all* their decisions. (Rohrbacher, *Hist. Univ.*, t. VI, p. 89.)

it, saying that she was already promised to another spouse. Procopius acquainted his father with the matter, and besought him to use that authority which he possessed as governor to obtain the consent of Agnes. The governor accordingly sent for her, and asked her why she refused an alliance with his son. Because, answered the Saint, I am promised to a Divine Spouse. The governor did not understand this answer; but one of his officers told him that the child was a Christian, and that the Divine Spouse meant the God of the Christians.

The governor, changing his tone and look, ordered the Saint to quit this impious sect upon the spot, under pain of losing her fortune and of being subjected to the most cruel tortures. He hoped to terrify her; but he was mistaken. Agnes, though of a delicate frame and a tender age, showed an intrepid soul, which only longed for martyrdom. The governor caused a raging fire to be kindled, and a great display made of iron hooks, racks, and other instruments of punishment. The young virgin beheld these dreadful preparations without the slightest alarm. This is not enough to say. She could not restrain her joy at the sight of the tortures that were in readiness for her, and freely presented herself to endure them. She was then dragged before idols, in order that she might be forced to offer incense to them, but she raised her hand only to make the sign of the cross. The governor, seeing the uselessness of all his endeavours, threatened to send the Saint to a place of infamy, where that chastity which she prized so much would be exposed to the insults of youthful libertines. Jesus Christ, answered Agnes, is too jealous of the chastity of His spouses to let them be robbed of that virtue: He is Himself its Guardian and Protector.

The judge, out of himself with anger, executed the threat that he had made: the Saint was dragged to a place of debauchery. A libertine who dared to present himself at the door was struck down by lightning and deprived of sight. His terrified companions carried him to the Saint, who immediately restored to him by her prayers his sight and health.[1]

Meanwhile, the chief accuser of Agnes was striving to embitter the magistrate more and more against her, but the magistrate had no need of a goad. Enraged to think that he should be held in scorn and defiance by a young virgin, he condemned her to be beheaded. The executioner, drawing near his frail victim, was touched with pity. His face grew pale; his hand shook: the Saint, full of joy, had to encourage him. She then made a short

[1] This place, in which the Saint was imprisoned, is at present a subterranean prison under the magnificent Church of St. Agnes, Rome.

prayer and bowed her head, as well to adore God as to receive the stroke that would consummate her sacrifice. The spectators could not restrain their tears on seeing one so young laden with chains, and yet so fearless under the trembling hand of the executioner She was buried near Rome, on the Nomentan road. The Mother of God and St. Agnes have always been specially invoked for obtaining the virtue of purity.

While Agnes was triumphing over the devil in the very capital of his empire, Eulalia was covering him with disgrace in Spain, where the war against the Christians was at its height. The barbarous Dacian, governor of the province, who had just put to death the Deacon St. Vincent in the midst of unheard-of torments, was then at Merida, the capital of Lusitania. Eulalia, a descendant of one of the chief families of Spain, had been brought up in the Christian Religion. An admirable gentleness of character, a rare modesty, a tender piety, and a great love for virginity had from her childhood rendered her alike dear to God and man. Gifted with a noble soul, she cared nothing for those things which usually flatter and destroy young girls, namely, dress and pleasure. She was only twelve years old when the edicts of Diocletian made their appearance, and, notwithstanding her youth, she looked on these edicts as the signal of battle. Her mother, uneasy at the ardour that she displayed for martyrdom, thought it a duty to take her away to the country.

Eulalia, guided by the Spirit of God, escapes during the night, and, after much fatigue, reaches Merida next morning at break of day. She runs to the palace, passes the governor's guard, and never stops till she goes to the tribunal, and finds herself, without turning pale, amid a forest of axes and fasces. She reproaches the haughty Dacian with his impiety in striving to have the only true Religion abjured. For the rest, she added, since you are seeking out Christians, I am a Christian. Dacian ordered her to be arrested. He at first tried caresses, and represented to her the wrong that she would do herself and the pain that she would give her parents, if she persisted in her disobedience.

These means being useless, he had recourse to threats, showed her all the instruments of punishment ready to be employed on her, and told her that she should not undergo a single torture if she would only take on the end of her finger a little salt and incense. Eulalia, to show that she was not going to be won over, knocked down the idol, and trampled on the cake prepared for the sacrifice. This holy boldness had its reward very soon. Two executioners laid hold of her, and tore her sides with iron hooks. Eulalia began to count her wounds, exclaiming with a most serene look,—Thou

art written on me, O Lord! Thy victories are engraven on my body with iron and steel. How I delight so to read them!

Burning torches were next applied to her breast and sides. She bore this new torture without a murmur. At length the tyrant ordered a great many torches to be lighted round the young martyr: the flames speedily took possession of her. Eulalia, seeing her clothes on fire, hastened to untie her hair, which a knot held up loosely under her veil. It floated over her shoulders, and covered them with numberless ringlets, such as art has never made. This precaution soothed a little her alarmed modesty; but already the flames enfolded her, and caught her hair. The moment that this last veil was torn from her, the chaste virgin expired, stifled by fire and smoke. Snow, falling abundantly, covered her body, and Heaven, providing for the funeral of a virgin who was dear to it, added to the pomp thereof by making the colour of virgins reign everywhere around. The Christians buried Eulalia near the place of her martyrdom. A magnificent church was afterwards built here, and her relics placed under the altar.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for choosing all that is most weak to overcome all that is most strong. Grant me the purity of SS. Agnes and Eulalia.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will think in the midst of my trials on the sufferings of the martyrs.*

LESSON XX.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FOURTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

Judgments of God on Diocletian, Maximian, and Galerius. Conversion of Constantine. Peace given to the Church. Influence of Christianity on National, Political, and Civil Laws. Charity.

In relating the history of the martyrs, we chose our illustrious witnesses of the Faith from all parts of the world—from East and West, from Asia, Africa, and Europe—and from all ages and conditions. To show thereby the catholicity and the unity of Religion, to sweep away the reproach of fanaticism that impiety raises against our holy martyrs, to teach all that every country and rank has given and may still give Saints to Heaven: these were our intentions. Martyrdom, or the testimony of blood, is assuredly an imperishable

monument to the truth of Christianity. The death of its persecutors is another monument no less splendid. Yes, the deaths of martyrs and the deaths of tyrants are like two glorious rows of pillars raised along the highway of time, at the end of which the penetrating eye may read the inscription, *To the immortal King of Ages, the Lamb that rules the world!* The deaths of martyrs prove the goodness of Our Lord, and the deaths of tyrants His justice. Both show that all men, kings and peoples, must contribute, whether willingly or unwillingly, to the establishment of His eternal reign.

Diocletian and his colleagues had sacrificed during ten years of persecution such an immense number of victims that they thought Christianity annihilated. Intoxicated with this foolish idea, they erected two marble pillars, which are still to be seen in Spain, with the following inscriptions:—

DIOCLET. JOVIUS, MAXIM. HERCULEUS,

CÆSS. AUGG.

AMPLIFICATO PER ORIENTEM ET OCCID. IMP. ROM.

ET NOMINE CHRISTIANOR. DELETO,

QUI REMP. EVERTEBANT.

DIOCLETIAN. CÆS. AUG.

GALERIO IN ORIENTE ADOPT.

SUPERSTITIONE CHRISTI UBIQ. DELETA,

CULTU DEORUM PROPAGATO.[1]

These grand inscriptions were to acquaint all future generations with the victories of tyrants, and lo, they have only immortalised their barbarity and their impotence. Even during their lives, the Lord was careful to humble them, and to take revenge for the blood of His disciples. Diocletian, intimidated by the power and enmity of Galerius, abdicated the throne at Nicomedia, that is to

[1] DIOCLETIAN JOVIAN,* MAXIMIAN HERCULES,
AUGUST CÆSARS.
FOR HAVING SPREAD THE ROMAN EMPIRE THROUGH EAST AND WEST.
AND BLOTTED OUT THE NAME OF CHRISTIANS,
WHO WERE CAUSING THE RUIN OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

DIOCLETIAN, CÆSAR AUGUSTUS.
FOR HAVING ADOPTED GALERIUS IN THE EAST;
FOR HAVING EVERYWHERE ABOLISHED THE SUPERSTITION OF CHRIST;
FOR HAVING EXTENDED THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS.

* Diocletian added to his name the title of Jovian, signifying a descendant of Jupiter

say, in the very city where he had signed the edict of persecution. He withdrew into Dalmatia, and there led a private life near Salona, at present Spalatro, where the ruins of his palace are still pointed out. A few years later on, he had the grief to see his wife and daughter condemned to death by the tyrant Licinius, and executed in a public square. To all this grief was joined that of seeing himself an object of general contempt. A prey to continual fears, he could scarcely eat or sleep. Day and night, his sighs were to be heard. His eyes were often wet with tears of despair. Sometimes he would roll about on his bed; sometimes on the ground. At length he died miserably—worn by hunger, melancholy, and disappointment.[1]

Maximian Hercules was also obliged to abdicate at Milan. Three times he attempted to recover the purple, and even to snatch it from his own son Maximus; but all his efforts were useless. He hanged himself in despair. Galerius, attacked by a dreadful disease, found himself eaten up alive by rottenness and worms. The stench proceeding from him was so disgusting that even his own domestics could not endure it.[2] Abandoned by all the world, he died a victim of the most cruel pains in the year 311. So perished three of the greatest persecutors of the Christian name. Now, kings, will ye understand? Will ye learn now, ye judges of the earth? And as for ourselves, let us profit of this salutary lesson: it is well calculated to strengthen our Faith; for we shall see in the course of ages that all those who dare to follow their example will share their fate.

Meanwhile, the moment marked out from eternity for the triumph of the Church was come. God had made known sufficiently that all the powers of the earth cannot destroy it. When the matter was perfectly clear that He alone had established it, He at length called in the emperors, and made Constantine the Great the declared protector of Christianity. This prince was son of Cæsar Constantius Chlorus. He united in his person the most eminent qualities: his bright genius, always tempered by rare wisdom, was set off by a noble figure and a graceful mien. After his father's death, he was proclaimed emperor at the age of thirty years. This dignity was disputed with him by Maximus, son of the Emperor Maximian Hercules. The two competitors had a few trivial encounters, in which the advantage lay at first with Maximus. Constantine determined on coming to a decisive battle, and, crossing the Alps, marched on Rome.[3]

[1] Lact., *de Mortib. persecutor.*, *sub. fin.*
[2] Euseb., l, IV, c. xvi; Lact., *loc. cit.*
[3] See Euseb. *in Vita Constant.*

As the army of Maximus was stronger than his own, he felt that he had need of some extraordinary help, and he thought of gaining the favour of the God of the Christians. He prayed to Him in the most earnest manner to make Himself known to him: this prince had a sincere heart, and he was heard. About midday, while he was marching at the head of his troops, the weather being calm and fine, he perceived in the heavens a shining cross, on which were written in bright characters the words, *By this sign thou shalt conquer.*[1] The whole army witnessed the prodigy; but no person was more alarmed than the prince. He spent the rest of the day in seeking out the meaning of such a wonderful occurrence. The following night, Jesus Christ appeared to him during his sleep with the same sign, and ordered him to make according to this model a standard to be borne by his troops in war, as a safeguard against his enemies.

Next morning the emperor called his most skilful workmen, and drew out for them a design of the standard. It was a kind of pike, covered with scales of gold, and having a bar running across, from which hung a banner woven of gold. At the top of the cross was a crown, enriched with precious stones. The crown enclosed the first two letters of the name of Christ, interlaced thus, ☧. On the banner appeared images of the emperor and his children. To this standard was given the name *Labarum*. Constantine chose out of his guards fifty of the bravest and most pious to carry it one after another. Encouraged by this heavenly vision, he did not hesitate to give battle to his enemy. Maximus was overcome; and, while endeavouring to escape, was drowned in the Tiber. Rome opened its gates to Constantine. The new master of the world sent for Pope St. Sylvester to instruct him in the truths of the Christian Religion, of which he made a public profession; and his first care was to publish an edict in favour of Christianity.[2]

There is nothing in history more certain than this miraculous appearance of a cross, related by Eusebius of Cæsarea, the historian and friend of the emperor, and confirmed by many other writers and by monuments of every kind. If some one else had told us of it, says the learned Bishop, he would have had much difficulty in persuading us to believe it; but the Emperor Constantine having himself narrated this prodigy for us, and assured us of the truth of his statement with an oath—assured us who write this history—can any person doubt of it, especially after the result has justified the promise?

Thus spoke Eusebius at a time when a countless multitude of

[1] In hoc signo vinces. [2] *Vita Constant.*

people, eye-witnesses of the fact, were still living, and might have given him the lie. People have the good grace to come forward now, fifteen centuries afterwards, without proofs, without documents, and to call in question such an important fact, solely because it does not suit them—what do I say?—solely because it proves the divinity of a Religion that is feared because not loved, and not loved because incompatible with the evil that is loved! For the rest, though we should give up this miracle to impiety, its cause would be nothing the better thereof: as we shall see in the next two lessons. We ask the believer and the unbeliever to read them with equal attention, the one to be strengthened in his Faith, and the other to be enlightened.

Up to the time of Constantine, the Church had had no *social* existence. There were Christian families, but there were no Christian nations. In ascending the throne with Constantine, Religion passed from the domestic to the social state. Then did she make her influence felt on nations, as she had made it felt on individuals. Public manners, the laws, language even, became gradually Christian, and the triumph of Our Lord ended by being complete. This salutary influence is well worthy of our study for a few moments. We owe so much to Religion, and we are so inclined withal to forget her benefits, that it is a real service to men to recall them to their minds.

Let us, therefore, recollect ourselves, and consider this influence, first, on the *Laws of Nations*, that is to say, in the relations of peoples one with another. Before the time of Christianity, the great law that regulated the relations of peoples among themselves was the law of might. *Woe to the conquered!*[1] was the general motto: hence, war was made only for the sake of booty or slaves. War was always accompanied with slaughter, burnings, and devastation in the conquered country, and followed by the slavery of its inhabitants. Now, we have seen what was the fate of slaves. Chains that could not be burst, all kinds of cruel treatment, the obligation of slaying one another in order to amuse their conquerors or to add honour to funerals: such was the only future that awaited them.

Christianity, passing on to the social state, modifies little by little this barbarous code. For the heartless law of brute force, it gradually substitutes the sweet law of universal charity. War is no longer waged with the same barbarity. Prisoners are no longer treated as slaves; gathered up on the field of battle by the conquerors, the wounded are cared for, comforted, and restored first to health, and afterwards to their country and their family.

[1] Væ victis.

Such is the general character of war among Christian nations; and, that everyone may know that it was by Christianity alone that this terrible scourge was so lightened, it still retains its character of barbarity among those modern nations which have not received the influence of the Gospel, and it becomes more and more barbarous among Christian nations in proportion as they lose this holy influence.

From this mild tempering of war came gradually the abolition of slavery; but here, how wise and far-seeing did Christianity show itself! To call slaves quite suddenly to liberty, would have been to disturb the whole world. Our Lord was content to lay down the principles of liberty in the Gospel, saying, "You are brethren; love one another as you love yourselves." And the Apostles and the Church proceeded to make, according to opportunities and circumstances, the application of these principles; and, without any violent shock or revolution, slaves passed on to liberty! It is admirable to behold the successive modifications of legislation under Christian influence. Read the Justinian Code, and the Capitularies of our own kings, especially those of Charlemagne, and you will assist at the transformation of the old into the new world. Here again, that everyone may know that it is to Christianity, and to Christianity alone, that the credit of abolishing slavery is due, it is enough to see how idolatrous nations still live under a pagan regime, and how rife is slavery still among them.

Let us now consider the influence of Christianity on the *Political Order* of things, in the relations between kings and peoples. Under paganism you always see the right of might predominant, that is to say, the weak everywhere victimised for the benefit of the strong. Kings were real despots; and peoples only vile herds that served all the caprices of their masters. The history of the Roman emperors places this humiliating truth in a class of points that are indisputable. The Divine Legislator, the King of Kings, died for His people, and from the summit of the cross He said, "Let him who is first among you become the servant of the others." From the same pulpit, we receive another lesson. While practising obedience to His Father even unto death, the Son of God said to the peoples, "I have given you an example, that you may do as I have done." Previously He had said, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." In these lessons is the consecration of authority and duty, the principle of the spirit of sacrifice, the true basis of society. Hence, when Christianity passes on to the social state, the peoples are no longer for the kings, but the kings are for the peoples: as children are not for parents, but parents for children. Dignities and lofty stations are called *charges;* and at the root

of these principles is the abolition of the right of material force. From all this has come that character of gentleness and equity which distinguishes the legislation of Christian peoples.

And that it may be well known that it is to Christianity, and to Christianity alone, that we are indebted for these advantages, idolatrous peoples are still ruled by the law of the strongest: their kings are despots. The more the influence of the Gospel is lessened among Christian nations, the more unjust, barbarous, and contradictory do the laws become; the more does despotism oppress and extend; the more does the State conspire against freedom and property; in a word, the more do all things tend to become as they were in the days of Tiberius and the other Cæsars—that is to say, the more do we return to the arbitrary sway of paganism.[1]

On the *Civil Order*. We have already seen what Christianity did in the family for the father, the mother, and the child. These benefits became laws under Constantine; that is to say, this emperor, applying to legislation the great evangelical principle of charity and equality, abolished polygamy and divorce: the two sources of slavery, disgrace, and misfortune to the pagan family. One indissoluble marriage, which dignifies the husband, ennobles the wife, and secures the life and the education of the child, in a word, which forms the happiness of the family in modern society, is so much a benefit of Christianity that wherever the Gospel does not reign, polygamy and divorce still flourish; and wherever the Gospel loses its influence, these two scourges reappear in one shape or another. Thus, under Christian influence, national laws, political laws, civil laws, all the relations of men among themselves, are modified, perfected, sanctified. Modern nations! here lies the principle of your superiority. May you never forget it! May you never oblige Religion to utter these bitter words, *I have brought up children, and they have despised me!*[2] Beware: Christianity was the triumph of charity over brute force, of regenerated man over degraded man, of the spirit over the flesh; if you drive it out, it will go to other peoples, worthier than you of its benefits! As the sun, sinking beneath the horizon, leaves nothing after him but a mournful gloom, so the heavenly light of the Gospel, departing from you, will leave you nothing but the darkness of error and the chaos of anarchy, with the expectation of the chains of slavery and the horrors of barbarism. See what has happened in Greece and in Africa, formerly so enlightened, so prosperous, and so happy, when they were Christian! Let their example serve you as a lesson.

[1] See *Code de la Religion et des mœurs*, by the Abbé Meusy, 2 vols. in 8vo. ; and, regarding all the details of this influence, our *Histoire de la société domestique*, t. II.

[2] *Is.*, i.

Lastly, the influence of Christianity on *All who suffer*. Under paganism the weak were everywhere oppressed and outraged. Everything that Christianity wrought in the laws was directed solely towards the end of protecting weakness against strength; and, thanks to its influence, the combats of gladiators were abolished. But outside the action of the laws there remained a multitude of miseries to alleviate. Christianity had to provide all the resources needed; but under persecution it was forced to confine them to itself. Scarcely was it set free, when it appeared as an immense overflowing of charity. It might have been called a river of love, which, falling from a high mountain, burst all banks, covered all fields, bearing life and fertility in all directions. Vying with one another might be seen houses rising for the support of little abandoned children, no matter what was the religion of their parents; others for orphans; others for the sick; others for strangers and travellers; others for all classes of the poor in general:[1] not a misery that had not its solace and its palace.

It was usually an apostle of this divine charity, a Priest, that had the superintendence of it, as at Alexandria St. Isidore, under the Patriarch St. Theophilus; and at Constantinople St. Zoticus, and afterwards St. Samson. There were individuals who maintained hospitals at their own expense, as St. Pammachius at Porto and St. Gallicanus at Ostia. The latter had been a patrician and consul, and it was a wonder that drew spectators from all parts to see a man of this rank, who had enjoyed the honours of a triumph and the friendship of the Emperor Constantine, to see him, I say, washing the feet of the poor, and serving them at table, and lavishing on the sick all kinds of care.[2] How often since his time has the same example been given by kings and queens, by princesses delicately reared on the steps of a throne! The service of the poor, which cannot be too highly praised, is a distinctive characteristic of the Christian Religion.

Holy Bishops spared nothing in providing for such expenses. They paid great attention to the burial of the poor, and the ransoming of persons who had fallen into the hands of barbarians, as often happened during the decline of the Roman Empire.[3] For these alms they even sold the sacred vessels, though so much privileged. St. Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse, reduced himself hereby to such a degree of poverty that he was obliged to carry the Body of Our

[1] The home for infants was called in Greek *brephotrophium;* that for orphans, *orphanotrophium;* that for sick people, *nosocomium;* that for strangers, *xenodochium;* that for old men, *gerontocomium;* that for all classes of the poor, *ptochotrophium.*

[2] Baron., *ad Dec.* 3.

[3] Cypr. *Ep.* lvi, p. 146; Mamachi, t III, p. 46.

Lord in a basket and the Precious Blood in a glass. St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, after selling everything else, sold himself as a slave to ransom a widow's son. Thus the great treasures of churches, the gold and silver ornaments, were regarded only as a deposit, held in expectation of an occasion to employ them, such as a public calamity, a plague, a famine: everything should yield to the maintenance of the living temples of the Holy Ghost.[1]

This change in manners is no less miraculous than the change in ideas. If, during the persecutions, a man had suddenly presented himself in the midst of the amphitheatre, where Old Rome drank with delight the blood of Christians, and, addressing the emperor, the senators, and the Roman ladies, had said—Noble emperor, who beholdest the world prostrate at thy feet! illustrious senators, descended from the Fabii and the Gracchi! and you superbly-robed matrons, so delicate and so disdainful! the day will come, and it is not far distant, when your daughters, having become Christians, will consider it an honour to serve the poor and the enslaved. All the miserable wretches on whom you now scarcely deign to cast a look, whom you crush with chains and clubs, whom you send to die on desert islands or by lonely roadsides, or whom you throw to your murænas, will be gathered up by your sons, respected, kindly cherished, and called by the name of brethren. The most illustrious of your children in future times shall regard it as more glorious to be the servants of the poor than the offspring of Scipios or Cæsars:—if, I say, a man had used this language, he would assuredly have been thought a fool. Nevertheless, he would have uttered a prophecy. And if, a hundred years after Constantine, all these great personages of Rome could have returned to the earth, what would have been their amazement on seeing the prophecy fulfilled? Would they not have exclaimed, It is an inconceivable prodigy, it can only be the work of God—*Incredibile, ergo divinum*[2]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given liberty to Thy Church! Praise be to Thee for all the benefits that it has poured on the world, and on each one of us individually!

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will daily pray for my temporal superior*

[1] Fleury, *Mœurs des Chrétiens*, p. 33.
[2] Tertull *adv. Marcion.*

LESSON XXI.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED.

Summary. Reflections on the Establishment of Christianity: Difficulty of the Undertaking; Weakness of the Means; Greatness of the Success Supposition.

THE first necessity of our days is to root Faith in souls. Unless we are greatly mistaken, the best means of doing so is to present in all its simplicity the fact of the establishment of Christianity: no proof more complete, more forcible, or more popular! We are about to set this fact forth, by summing up in the present and next lessons all that has just been explained with regard to the first three centuries. Nothing more authentic than our narrative. It rests on the unanimous testimony of Jews, Pagans, and Christians, that is to say, on the authority of unexceptionable witnesses.[1] To deny their depositions would be the same as to deny all historical certainty. Now, to exhibit this fact in the broad light of day, it will be enough to show it from three different points of view, namely, as regards the difficulty of the undertaking, the weakness of the means, and the greatness of the success.

1. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE UNDERTAKING. Jewish, Pagan, and Christian authors tell us with one voice that at the time when Christianity made its appearance, the whole earth, save one little corner inhabited by the Jews, was given over to idolatry. The object of the undertaking was to destroy Judaism and Paganism, and on their ruins to raise the fabric of Christianity. There was question therefore of declaring war against all peoples, and of attacking them on that point which is the strongest and most sacred in the human heart, namely, the religious sentiment. Among the Pagans, the religious sentiment was particularly energetic; it was confounded with the passions, which had become the sole object of general worship. Among both Jews and Pagans, it was confounded with prejudices most flattering to the national pride; for all regarded their political institutions as inviolably connected with the preservation of their religion. On the faith of her oracles, Rome,

[1] Their testimony may be seen (*a*) in Bullet, *Hist. de l'etabl. du Christ.*; (*b*) in P. Decolonia, *la Vérité du Christ. prouvée par les auteurs païens*; (*c*) in P. Mamachi, *Origines et antiq. chris.*, t. I, II, III, et IV; (*d*) in all the Fathers, especially St. Justin, Tertullian, Origen, Arnobus, and Lactantius; (*e*) in Tacitus, *Hist.*, l. XV, and Suetonius, *in Vespas. et Domit.*, etc; (*f*) in all Gospel Demonstrations; (*g*) in the Talmud, etc.; (*h*) in Baronius, *Ann. Ec.*, from the year 34 to the year 310

the mistress of the world, thought Paganism the cause of her successes and the pledge of the everlasting duration of her empire. It is plain therefore that the whole undertaking was only a tissue of difficulties, one graver than another.

First Difficulty: To destroy Judaism. The Jews were few in number, it is true, but their attachment to their Religion was most ardent, most deep, and most interested.

A most ardent attachment. For several centuries they had been radically cured of their inclination to idolatry. Rather than renounce the Law of Moses, they had suffered pillages, devastations, wrongs of every kind, from the King of Syria. In defence of their faith, a great many of them had shed their blood on the field of battle, under the leadership of the sons of Mathathias. Others had generously confessed their faith before tyrants, and let themselves be put to death amid the most frightful tortures rather than abjure it: such were the holy old man Eleazar, and the mother of the Machabees, with her seven sons.

A most deep attachment. Judaism was the true Religion. It had God Himself for its Author; the patriarchs and the prophets, who were the glory of the nation, for its interpreters; the Jews themselves for its only depositaries. Jerusalem was the dwelling-place of the Lord; His temple, the only sanctuary in which He received the adorations of men and delivered His oracles. A long series of prodigies served as the foundations of this Religion. The fidelity of the Children of Israel to the Law given from Heaven had been the source of innumerable blessings to them: it had merited for them the favour of the haughtiest conquerors; it was still the secret of their strength, and of their superiority over all other peoples.

A most interested attachment. The false interpretation given by the Pharisees to the prophecies was so flattering to the national pride that it had become the basis of all their hopes. The Jews looked forward with a fanatical obstinacy to the arrival of a Conquering Messias, who would deliver them from the yoke of the Gentiles, place in their hands the sceptre of the world, and bring back to them the happy days of the reign of Solomon.

Now, it was necessary to convince them that the Pharisaical interpretation of the prophecies was an error; their expectation of a Conquering Messias a chimera; their religion a vain shadow, which should give place to the reality; their title of the chosen people of God, hitherto exclusive, a title which should be shared by all other peoples. It was necessary to convince them that their great hatred and contempt for the Gentiles were two guilty sentiments, which should yield to fraternal love: so far that, passing

over the prohibitions laid down in the Law of Moses, which forbade them all religious intercourse with Pagans, they should, under pain of everlasting damnation, adore with them in the same temples and according to the same forms of worship a Man who had been judged, condemned, and executed by themselves and the Pagans as a notorious malefactor, and should recognise Him as the only God of heaven and earth.

Second Difficulty: To destroy Paganism. The Pagans were no less attached to their religion than the Jews. In effect, far from restraining the passions, Paganism flattered all the inclinations dearest to the heart of man. The mind was not obliged to stoop under the yoke of impenetrable mysteries: everything in pagan dogmas was easy to degraded reason, and, moreover, there was no authority that could compel it to receive as the rule of its belief whatever it chose to reject.

The morals of Paganism left the heart perfectly free as regards its affections. "The disorders towards which man feels such an insatiable propensity were not only permitted, but even held in honour; nay, rewards were decreed to them. What do I say? Authorised and consecrated by the example of the gods, they were to a certain extent obligatory. Excesses of intemperance and luxury were the chief elements in the mysteries of Bacchus, Cybele, and Venus. To abandon oneself to public prostitution was an act of religion. The gods also encouraged an ardent desire of riches, even when sought by unlawful means. Thieves used to invoke Mercury and the Goddess Laverna, that they might have success in their enterprises. The idea of a life to come mixed no bitterness with the pleasures of this life. No crimes were to be punished in Tartarus but a few monstrous ones, which men naturally abhor, and which nearly all avoid: other disorders would not prevent admission to the Elysian Fields."[1]

The worship of Paganism set forth as many charms as its dogmas or its morals. "To honour the gods, magnificent temples were raised; the priests, superbly clad, sacrificed pompously-decked victims; young persons of both sexes, attired in long white robes and crowned with flowers, waited on the ministers; all the people displayed the richest things in their possession. Emperors, consuls, magistrates, and senators, bearing the emblems of their dignity, heightened by their presence the splendour of the ceremonies. The air was filled with exquisite perfumes, burned in profusion. The sweetest voices and the most harmonius instruments joined in an

[1] See Bullet, *Histoire de l'etablissement du Christianisme;* and *Les Trois Rome*, description of the Coliseum and the Grand Circus, t. I et II.

entrancing concert. The sacrifice was followed by banquets, dances, games, gladiatorial combats, illuminations, and plays. Such were the festivals of the gods: public and general diversions. Rome consecrated nearly half the year thereto."[1]

Add that whatever could authorise a worship gave its support to this attractive religion. Men had imbibed a love for it with their mother's milk: they regarded it as the most precious inheritance received from their ancestors. The peoples considered that their happiness was inseparably attached to it; they made it the foundation of their republics and their states. It was so dear to them that they would fight more earnestly in its defence than for their lives. This religion was so old that its origin was lost in the vista of ages. It was supposed to have begun with the world: the one had the same gods named for its authors as the other. All times and countries rendered testimony to it. The greatest orators avenged the outrages committed against it. The proudest generals of armies would never set out on their expeditions without first going solemnly to invoke the gods in those temples which were afterwards to be adorned with the trophies of their victories. The masters of the world thought it an honour to be the servants of the gods.

"The gods had manifested their power when it was invoked. The temples were full of inscriptions placed there by persons who had experienced their aid; and histories were full of the prodigies which they had wrought. They delivered oracles which proved that the future was unclouded to them. There were even some places made famous by a series of prodigies daily occurring at them, and some temples in which the gods had appeared under human form. The Sibylline verses promised Rome that she should retain her empire as long as she observed her ancient ceremonies; and this city showed an ardent zeal for the maintenance of a religion which assured her of such a high destiny. It was thus that heaven and earth, gods and men, seemed to concur in the establishment of idolatry."[2]

Third Difficulty: To establish Christianity. To destroy Judaism and Paganism was only the first and the easier part of the undertaking; to raise Christianity on their ruins was the second. Now, what was this Christianity? It was everything most repugnant to the Jews and the Pagans, everything most opposed to the inclinations of degraded man. To the greater number, Christianity in

[1] See Bullet, *Histoire de l'etablissement du Christianisme;* and *Les Trois Rome*, description of the Coliseum and the Grand Circus, t. I et II.

[2] Bullet, *id.*, p. 62. See also, in *Les Trois Rome*, the history of the oracle of Prenesta, t. III.

itself was quite a new Religion—a Religion decried beforehand by the ignominious death of its Author—a Religion thought contemptible by the poverty and the obscurity of its followers.

To a considerable number, among the Jews as well as the Gentiles, Christianity was something still more odious: it was a formidable apparition of the truth, of that accusing truth which man dreads as a plague, because it condemns his works of darkness, and pursues him with a pitiless light and an implacable remorse. What would not be the alarm and the rage of all those men of corrupt hearts with whom the world was full, when they should behold this absolute Queen coming to vindicate her usurped rights? If the wisest of the philosophers, Socrates, was, as we are told, condemned to drink hemlock for having dared to bring forward one reforming truth, how would they be treated who should proclaim all with an authority permitting of no reply? Thus, by a singular coincidence, both the ignorance of the vulgar and the learning of the wise combined in opposing the establishment of Christianity.

It must be said that their most dangerous accomplice was Christianity itself. In its dogmas, it was a Religion all bristling with mysteries offensive to reason. Foolishness to the Gentiles and a scandal to the Jews, it preached only one God, and in this God three Persons. It preached a Man-God; a God born of a Virgin; a God to be eaten like a morsel of bread and drunk like a few drops of wine; a God a Jew, nay, a crucified Jew; and a hundred other dogmas alike incredible, ridiculous, absurd to the eyes of human wisdom, which it was necessary however to admit without a word of complaint, to admit so unhesitatingly as to be ready to die in their defence, under pain of falling, at the close of life, into eternal flames.

In its morals, it was a Religion terrible by its severity and its austerity. Terrible by its severity, it was not satisfied with condemning those guilty actions which Paganism made virtuous. It proscribed the least word, look, or gesture contrary to any one of the virtues that it preached; and it preached all. What do I say? Going down into the depths of consciences, it sought out the most hidden and delicate fibres of sin, and pitilessly tore them away. To its eyes, the mere passing thought of evil, if indulged, was a crime that should be punished with an eternity of woe. No compromise with inclinations the most importunate or the most cherished. Terrible by its austerity, it spoke of nothing but prayers, tears, mortifications, fasts, privations, humiliating avowals, and a thousand other such practices, one more disagreeable than another. It required the observance of unknown laws—laws contrary to ancient customs and established prejudices—such as those bearing on the

forgiveness of injuries, the love of enemies, the near relationship of all mankind, consequently the abolition of slavery, which was the social basis of the whole pagan world.

In its worship it was no less repulsive. It was a poor Religion, which, instead of pompous feasts, dances, gaieties, plays, combats, offered nothing but sad memories, sober readings, serious reflections, solemn prayers, in no way flattering to the senses: a Religion altogether spiritual and of the future, which offered nothing as a reward here on earth but contempt, hatred, spoliation, death, under the most frightful forms, and, after death, invisible goods of whose nature man could not so much as conceive an idea.

Fourth Difficulty: The Extent of the Undertaking. On whom is the attempt made to impose this terrible Religion? Is it on a few sequestered, ignorant, half-savage villagers? No. Is it on a few cities of the East or the West, strangers alike to the enlightenment and the depravity of the rest of the world? No. Is it on barbarous peoples only—not on the Greeks and the Romans, the pioneers of civilisation? No. This Religion is to be preached to all peoples without exception, from pole to pole: the undertaking is to have no other limits than those of the earth. "The colds of the North, the heats of the South, the vastness of the ocean, the ruggedness of mountains, the sands of deserts, will be frail barriers against its progress. The colossal empire of the Cæsars, which imagines itself the whole world, is only to be a part of that Church which shall be established. The proud Roman, the effeminate Asiatic, the voluptuous Indian, the stupid Moor, the headstrong German, the fierce Scythian, all take their places in this project. The Gospel shall be preached in the synagogues of the Jews, in the temples of idols, in the academies of Athens, in the squares of Rome, in the courts of the masters of the world. The influence of climes, the antipathies of minds, the jealousy of glory, the rivalry of sway, the contrast of manners, the variety of costumes, the peculiarities of vices, must not prevent all peoples from uniting in one society and adopting one belief, from observing the same maxims and practising the same virtues, from regarding one another as the members of one family."[1]

Fifth Difficulty: The Time. What time was chosen for preaching this strange folly, for imposing this cruel Religion? Doubtless one of those barbarous ages mentioned by the poets, when men, wandering through forests, without instruction, without protection, were ready to believe any dream narrated for them by clever impostors; or, without passions as well as without vices, were ready

[1] Bullet, *id.*, p. 65.

to receive the painful yoke of any morality whatsoever that should be presented to them? No. The precise age chosen was that of Augustus, the most enlightened and the most corrupt of all pagan ages: the age of orators, historians, poets, philosophers, diplomatists, warriors, men so great that they are still, through a strange infatuation, held up before youth as models and masters, yet men whose debaucheries seem almost fabulous, men whom the very idea of duty or restraint was enough to set in a fury. To practise theft, usury, extortion, infamous vices under every form and with every refinement, was their study, their life. To have their fellow-men devoured by armies of tigers, lions, and panthers, or slaughtering one another in their presence, was an amusement so regular that the sun could not rise a single day without shining on it somewhere; an amusement so pleasing that mountains of gold would be sacrificed to procure it; an amusement such that, by promising it to the people, a man might be sure, though he were the last of the vile, to reach the first dignities of the empire.'

Sixth Difficulty: Calumniators. Scarcely had Christianity made its appearance when thousands of calumniating voices were raised against it. They followed, accompanied, preceded all its steps, spoiling its early conquests, and labouring to render future ones impossible. Divided on every other point, the Jews and the Pagans had agreed to maintain that wrathful concert which resounded through East and West. Nobodies, renegades, blasphemers, rebels, destroyers of the true Religion, enemies of the holy nation, disturbers of the public peace; profaners of Scripture, which they wickedly interpreted in a manner adverse to all the hopes of Israel; fanatics, who carried their sacrilegious deceptions so far as to substitute for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a notorious malefactor, juridically condemned and executed for his crimes: such were, with many other insults, the names applied by the Jews to the Christians.

"The disciples of Christ," said the Pagans in their turn, "are atheists, whose impiety provokes the anger of the immortal gods; magicians, who, the better to succeed in their wicked designs, do not wish to have among them any learned, virtuous, or rich men, but only simpletons, dupes, children, silly women, slaves, criminals, like those who invented this abominable superstition, and whose leader, delivered up to Pilate by his own nation, justly underwent the infamous punishment of the cross; monsters with human faces, who, in their nocturnal banquets, slaughter an infant, drink its warm blood, and greedily eat its flesh, after which they plunge into the most shameful debaucheries."

[1] See Cicero, quoted in our *Histoire de la Famil* . t. I.

These calumnies and a thousand others were so prevalent that the name of Christian meant a person guilty of all sorts of crimes, so that it was enough to bear it to be straightway judged deserving of all tortures and the hatred of the human race.[1]

Seventh Difficulty: Heretics. Pursued with so much indignation, Christianity had no resource but in the close union of its members. Yet behold how a new obstacle, the most dangerous perhaps of all, is formed from the beginning in the very bosom of the new Religion!

Division occurs among the Christians: heretics make their appearance. A few steps from the Upper Chamber, whence Christianity lately came forth, they raise altar against altar. Even in the lifetime of the Apostles, they change the doctrine of the Master, weaken the authority of pastors in the minds of neophytes, compose histories that throw doubts on the authenticity of the Gospels, preach monstrous errors that give rise to detestable sects more numerous during the first three centuries of the Church than at any other period. Profiting of this division, the Jews and the Pagans begin to cry out that Christians are deserving of no credence, since they agree so ill among themselves.

Eighth Difficulty: Philosophers. In the train of the heretics, come the Jewish and Pagan philosophers. Lending an attentive ear, they gather up every rumour that is afloat concerning the Christians. They seek information. They read the Scriptures and the Apologies. Then, taking it up as a duty, they set about proving that all the rumours are well founded, that the Christians are really atheists, enemies both of the gods and the Cæsars, in a word, criminals such as described; and that their doctrines are a heap of reveries, contradictions, and impieties. Nothing is wanting in the works of the philosophers—challenges, sarcasms, arguments, research, eloquence, genius itself.[2] No objection is forgotten: so that even in the fourth century the ablest enemies of Religion could not find a new one. The case was settled. The people, always accustomed to believe the assertions of their sages, were immovably fixed in their opinion regarding the Christians, and this opinion they summed up in a few expressive words, *The Christians to the lions!*[3]

Ninth Difficulty: Comedians While the calumniators draw general execration on Christianity, and the heretics rend its bosom,

[1] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. x.; Tacitus, *Annal.*, lib. xv.—When being led to execution, they were preceded by a herald, who cried out, An enemy of the emperors and the gods!—Euplius Christianus, inimicus deorum et imperatorum. (*Act. martyr.*, D. Ruinart, p. 440.)

[2] See the words of Celsus, Porphyry, Lucian, Julian the Apostate, &c.

[3] Christianos ad leonem. (Tertull., *Apol.*, c. xl.)

and the philosophers banish it from the minds of intelligent men, the comedians lay profane hands on it, and hold it up to the derision of the people. Its most august ceremonies, its most sacred mysteries, its most venerable laws, ridiculed in the theatre, are struck with a condemnation that drives far more persons away from them than the sword of the executioner. How, I ask you, could anyone be expected to reverence in the morning what he had witnessed the previous evening with laughtér and scorn ?[1]

Tenth Difficulty: The very Progress of Christianity. Who would believe it? It is not even by the progress of Christianity that there will be no obstacles raised against its propagation, no threats uttered against its existence. Among those who hear the new preachers, some, docile to grace, embrace the truth; others remain obstinate in error. Children become Christians; parents continue pagans. Slaves are baptised, and refuse to follow the abominable caprices of their masters. Buyers no longer visit the shops of the sellers of idols. Families and cities are divided. The ties of kindred and friendship are ignored: the brother denounces his brother; the father, his son; the husband, his wife; the master, his slave; the friend, his friend. Intestine quarrels prevail everywhere, and daily provoke violent explosions of rage against the new preachers and their doctrines.

Eleventh Difficulty: Persecutions. As the waves of the sea on a stormy day rise to the full height of the rocks that gird the coast, so this mass of calumnies, surging to and fro, with murmurs and accusations, reaches at length the imperial throne, on which is seated a Nero or a Diocletian. To the emperor it is henceforth an evident fact that Christianity is an element of discord; that the Christians are a turbulent sect who oppose the prosperity of the empire—impious wretches who shake its foundations by provoking the anger of the gods, the worship of whom is the pledge of Rome's everlasting domination. If the barbarians threaten the frontiers, if the imperial legions meet a check, if the Tiber overflows, if an earthquake occurs, if a drought is felt, if a pestilence comes, the Christians are responsible for it.[2]

Then are set afoot those famous persecutions, those general massacres, of which the whole world hears, and which, a thousand to one, will extinguish the new Religion in the blood of its disciples. At a time when the lives of human beings are recklessly sported with, when the most cruel tortures are the most agreeable to the spectators, no rank or age or sex is spared: the more victims,

[1] See the martyrdom of St. Genesius.
[2] Tertull., *Apol.*, c. xxxviii.

the more glory. Ordinary punishments seem too mild for wretches known to be the enemies of the gods and the State: others that make us shudder are invented. The Christians are beaten with rods, flayed with iron hooks, consumed by fire, nailed to crosses. It is merely a pastime to see them pulled to pieces by dogs, or devoured by lions. They are covered with burning plates, seated on red hot chairs, plunged into boiling oil, roasted at a slow fire, ground under millstones, cut up into little bits. On their bodies, covered with wounds, there is nothing more to be torn but their wounds. The few moments of life remaining to them are cruelly economised: either those tortures are selected which bring about death most gradually, or they are cured with barbarous care, that they may be able to endure new ones.

Pity has no place for them in the hearts of men: their sufferings are hailed with shouts of joy. Death itself does not set them free from the grasp of their persecutors. The sad remains of their bodies provoke rage: they are burned to ashes, thrown into rivers, flung to the winds, that they may if possible be annihilated. Rome is drunk with their blood; she pours it out in lavish streams,[1] and yet she is not satisfied. Like a terrible fire, the persecution once kindled in the capital spreads from city to city, from village to village, until it reaches the ends of the empire, then almost as extensive as the world. It is not a persecution of a few days: we must count the times of the sufferings of the Church by centuries. For three hundred years we can follow her only by the traces of the blood that she sheds, and the glare of the piles that are lighted to destroy her.

To persecutions of blood succeed those of flattery. They who cannot be seduced by harsh measures must by gentle ones. Riches,

[1] Bullet, *id.*, p. 81.—Persons have tried to call in question the tortures of the martyrs, on the ground of their being too frightful. Such persons show clearly that they know little of antiquity. First, the most dreadful of all, which was commanded by Nero, is related by Tacitus himself, a pagan historian above suspicion. Then, most of the others were used towards slaves, parricides, faithless vestals, and great criminals in general. Now, among all criminals, the Christians were supposed to hold the first rank.

It is also said that the number of the martyrs has been exaggerated. The same answer. When we see Caligula causing eighteen thousand men to be slaughtered in one day for the amusement of the people, when we see countless thousands of gladiators led into the amphitheatre by emperors, magistrates, and private individuals, we have a manifest proof that under paganism no value was set on the lives of men; and the greatest massacres are perfectly credible, for they perfectly harmonise with the spirit of the period. On these matters, see Mamachi, *De costumi de' primit. Crist.*, t. I., pref.; Bullet, *Hist. de l'etabl. du Christ.*; Baronius, *Annal.*, an. 34, 313; *les Trois Rome*, t. I., II., IV.; &c.

honours, offices, the favour of the prince, all are promised to win over men insensible to pain, against whom tortures are useless, for whom death has no sting. It is thus that every effort is made to efface the name of Christian.[1] Now, summon before your eyes all the difficulties that we have just pointed out, give free course to your mind, and tell us whether you can imagine any undertaking more gigantic than the establishment of Christianity.

2. The weakness of the means. The revolution here proposed is assuredly the most difficult imaginable. Yet the means may be so powerful, and so suitable, that they will gradually produce results deemed impossible. Accordingly, one expects, and good sense requires, the appearance of beings as extraordinary as the mission confided to them. Since human nature presents none of such a character, doubtless the angelic will provide heroes for this amazing conquest? No. What then? Human nature. At least there will be chosen out of humanity all that it contains most distinguished by superiority of talent, by nobility of birth, by splendour of dignities, by immensity of wealth, by greatness of power—the Cæsars, the absolute masters of the world? No. At least the Greeks, famous throughout the earth for their wisdom and their marvellous eloquence? No. The Romans, whose very name makes kings tremble? No; but, instead of all these, the barbarians! Well, at least illustrious barbarians, such as the Egyptians, fathers of science, or the Gauls, objects of terror to Rome itself? No; less yet.

Who then? The Jews, a people hated and despised by all other peoples. But at least the chiefs of the nation, the high-priests, the rich, the learned? No. Who then? Men of the lowest class—fishermen by occupation. But under a rough exterior they doubtless hide the finest gifts of genius; they are most eloquent? They do not even know their own language. Most learned? They know nothing but the art of fishing. Most rich? Their wealth consists of a few boats and nets. Most virtuous? One has been guilty of perjury, others of ambition and jealousy; all are looked upon as men of low character, men of evil life.[2] They are, then, heroes by their courage? The bravest of them all trembles like a leaf at the voice of a servant-maid. At least their want of courage will be counterbalanced by their numbers; there will be millions of them? There are twelve, neither more nor less. Yes, twelve fishermen, twelve Jews, which literally means twelve of the last of men from the last of nations; or, according to the just expression used by one of

[1] Bullet, *id.*, p. 82.
[2] Celsus, in Origen, l. II., n. 46; *id.*, l. I., 26.

themselves, they are the refuse of the world.' Such, as we learn from the unanimous testimony of Jews, Pagans, and Christians, were the heroes of the greatest enterprise ever conceived. These were the men who should appear at the most refined courts, speak before the most illustrious assemblies, and be the teachers of kings and peoples. Theirs was the task to convince the wise of folly, the philosophers of ignorance, the whole world of crime and error.

Here again consider the material of which the Apostles were made, and tell us whether any means could possibly be found more disproportioned to the immensity of an undertaking. That a dozen of boatmen should think of triumphing over the world—what a mockery!

3. The greatness of the success. What will the issue of the undertaking be? What success can be expected from men who seem to have no idea of the nature of obstacles? "On the one hand, we see a pleasing and pompous religion, which is believed to be the work of the gods, which is thought as old as the world, which is regarded as the foundation of public prosperity; on the other, a severe, plain, new religion, opposed to national customs and to the established order of things. On the one hand, the sages, the philosophers, the counsellors, the magistrates, the emperors, the armies, the whole world; on the other, a few ignorant, powerless, helpless men. On the one hand, authority, cruelty, fury; on the other, weakness, patience, death. On the one hand, executioners; on the other, victims."[2] Whose will the victory be? The world's, says reason. The fishermen's, replies history. Yes: and profane history, as written by the Jews, and by the Pagans themselves, eye-witnesses of the event and mortal enemies of Christianity. This history teaches that the success of the Galilean fishermen was rapid, perilous, real, and permanent.

Rapid. The first day on which the strange preachers put their hands to the work, three thousand Jews fell at their feet and embraced their doctrines; the next day, five thousand others imitated this example. With the rapidity of lightning, Christianity spreads over Samaria, Syria, and Asia Minor. The cities of Smyrna, Ephesus, Corinth, and Athens open their gates to it. Arabia, India, Persia, Armenia, Ethiopia, Lybia, Egypt, supply it with innumerable disciples. From the East it passes on to the West; and, after a few years, Rome, the capital of the world, the dwelling-

[1] 1 Cor., iv, 13.—Celsus, in Origen, l. 1., n. 42, says: Jesum ascitis decem aut undecim hominibus famosis, publicanis nautisque nequissimis, huc illuc cum illis fugitasse turpiter et ægre cibos colligentem.

[2] Bullet, *id.*, p. 82.

place of Nero, the citadel of idolatry, is peopled with multitudes of Christians.[1]

Gaul, Spain, Britain, Germany, count them by thousands, so that half a century has scarcely elapsed when, according to the testimony of the persecutors themselves, the Christian sect swarms in every province of the Empire.[2]

Eighty years later on, a defender of Christianity, Tertullian, says fearlessly to the Roman magistrates, "We are only of yesterday, and yet we fill your cities, your islands, your forts, your colonies, your villages, your assemblies, your camps, the Emperor's palace, the Senate, the Forum: we leave you nothing but your temples. . . . We might, even without an open rebellion, put you to an ignominious defeat: we should only have to separate from you. Let this immense multitude once leave you and go to some distant land, the loss of so many citizens of every condition would dishonour your government, and punish you sufficiently. Alarmed at your solitude, at the cessation of business, at the stupor of the whole world, apparently stricken with death, you would have to look about for some one to command you: there would be more enemies left you than citizens."[3]

Thus, while Rome, ever in arms, took seven hundred years of victory to form her empire, Christianity, unarmed, reigns from its origin over all nations, and the cross of Jesus Christ is planted on shores never seen by the eagle of the Cæsars. In less than three centuries after its departure from the Upper Chamber, the New Religion will have subjugated Rome itself, and, quietly seated on the imperial throne, will alone wield the sceptre of the world.

[1] The remarks made by Tacitus are so important that we must give them in full. This grave historian is speaking of what Nero did to clear himself from the blame of having set fire to Rome: —Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit, reos et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit. Auctor nominis hujus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæm originem ejus mali, sed per Urbem etiam quo cuncta undique atrocia, aut pudenda confluunt, celebranturque. Igitur primo correpti, qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum *multitudo ingens*, haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi deficisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. Hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat, et circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigæ permixtus plebi, vel curriculo insistens; unde quanquam adversus sontes et novissima exempla meritos, miseratio oriebatur, tanquam non utilitate publica, sed in sævitiam unius absumerentur. (*Annal.*, lib. XV.—*Id*, Sueton., *in Ner.*; Senec., *Epist.*, xiv.; Juv., *Satir.*, i., etc.)

[2] See edicts of persecution, and Pliny's letter to Trajan.

[3] *Apol.*, c. xl.

Perilous. This eagerness for Christianity is not a speculation likely to be profitable, nor a turn of fashion pleasing to vanity, nor a transitory enthusiasm arising more from levity than reflection, nor a weak resolve unattended with any serious obligations. To become a Christian is to expose oneself to the loss of property, to the contempt and hatred of one's neighbours, to the fury of the people and the emperors, to exile: in a word, it is to sign one's sentence of death. And, O great God, what a death! Death amid the most frightful tortures! Death amid the applause of numberless spectators!

Well, this sentence of death is signed cheerfully, not by a few fanatics, only in one corner of the world, for some odd months or years. It is signed: an opportunity of doing so is earnestly sought, or at least is gratefully accepted, by immense crowds of people—children, maidens, wives, old men, senators, consuls, generals, philosophers, rich and poor, in every country enlightened by the sun, and this for the space of three centuries. In vain do edicts of persecution fall on the Christians like hail on a winter's day; in vain do troops of proconsuls, dragging after them hordes of executioners and fearful instruments of torture, scour the provinces; in vain are scaffolds raised and funeral piles lighted throughout the length and breadth of the Empire; in vain are wild beasts of every kind that may be found in the forests of Germany and the deserts of Africa let loose in the amphitheatres and circuses to devour Christians: the fire of persecution only increases the ardour for martyrdom.

From their lofty thrones, the masters of the world command the adoration of the gods, and they are despised; from the throne of His cross, Jesus commands the peoples to come to Him, and the multitudes rush to Him over gibbets and racks. All Olympus trembles on its altars. The magistrates turn pale amid their fasces. Even the executioners grow tired, so that the blunted axes drop from their hands; and, becoming Christians in their turn, they mingle their blood with that of their victims. If you read the accounts of this dreadful combat, you will find that, according to the most scrupulous calculations, there were eleven millions of martyrs during the first three centuries. Of this number, Rome alone counts as her portion more than two millions.[1]

Real. Christianity does not act merely on the surface: it penetrates into the depths of the soul. Under its mighty influence, the most effeminate hearts are strengthened; the most deeply rooted vices give place to solid virtues: humility dethrones pride; meekness, chastity, and patience triumph over revenge, impurity, and cruelty. The ideas undergo a like change. To the most absurd

[1] See our *Histoire des Catacombes*

fancies regarding God and Providence, regarding man and his destiny, regarding the world and its uses, succeeds a true, certain, precise knowledge, so sublimely simple that it is the source of all that superiority which characterises Christian nations in comparison with Pagan ones. Extending still further its beneficent influence, Christianity modifies all the laws of religious, political, civil, and domestic society. From one pole to another, the innumerable deities that drank the blood of men and that were honoured by crimes, are thrown down from their altars: the Unity of God shines on the world like the sun rising above the horizon. With its pure clear light, this dogma brightens, adorns, and vivifies the human race.

Thanks to the New Religion, the peoples cease to behold an enemy in every stranger. The savage maxim, *Woe to the conquered!* is erased from banners and forgotten by conquerors. To the law of hatred, the basis of pagan society, succeeds the sweet law of universal charity, which makes all mankind the members of one family. Abolished by law from the promulgation of Christianity, slavery is abolished in deed as soon as circumstances permit it. Marriage is recalled to its first dignity—what do I say?—to a higher dignity: it is sanctified as well in the act that constitutes it as in the duties that it imposes. Polygamy and divorce, authorised by all ancient legislation, become enormous crimes. The father ceases to be a despot; the wife, a slave; the child, a victim. Even the poor, regarded as objects of general hatred and contempt, become sacred beings, for whom magnificent palaces must be built: the rich man gives his gold to buy them food, his sons to protect them, his daughters to lavish cares on them, himself to serve them.

Permanent. I cast my eyes over the world; I run through every age: what do I behold but ruins? Babylon is fallen, Ninive is fallen, Memphis is fallen. Carthage, Thebes, and Lacedæmon are no more. The huge monarchies of the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans are gone. Ruins everywhere in the pagan world! Shall it be the same with the edifice raised by the Galilean fishermen? Eighteen centuries will answer you thus:—No, their work is not a perishable work. The revolution that they effect is not such as one century may see completed, and the next undone Differing from all the other facts of history, the passage of the world to Christianity is a living fact: everything else is but a ruin.

What has become of the vaunted institutions of peoples, the systems of philosophers, the codes of the wisest legislators? Where are the Neros, the Diocletians, all the fierce enemies of Christianity? Where are the Arians, the Macedonians, the Donatists, the crowds of heretics who one after another tore the bosom of the Church? All changed, all dead, all gone! Rome herself, Pagan Rome, the

haughty queen who was drunk with the blood of martyrs, and who thought that she had stamped out the Christian name, Pagan Rome sleeps, buried with her gods and her Cæsars, under the mutilated ruins of her palaces and her temples. Scores of times, during eighteen centuries, have peoples succeeded peoples, and empires crumbled away to give place to other empires: alone unchangeable, the society founded by the Galilean fishermen has not lost one of its dogmas, nor one of its laws. As youthful to-day as the day it left its cradle, as vigorous now as at any former period of its existence, it defies alike the barbarity of peoples, the storms of rebellious passions, the axes of executioners, the sophisms of impiety, and the scandals of its own members, and stands erect amid the scattered fragments of all human institutions.

Another time give free course to your mind, and tell us whether there ever was a success more amazing, or more disproportioned to the means employed for its attainment.

Behold, in all its simplicity, the fact of the establishment of Christianity, such as it has been recorded for us by Jews, Pagans, and Christians—irreproachable eye-witnesses! We do not draw our conclusions from it here: we merely state it. Only, to show how striking it is, let us be permitted to make a supposition.

Let us go back to the time when Christianity appeared on the earth, and suppose with St. John Chrysostom that a pagan philosopher meets the Saviour beginning to preach His doctrine. Jesus is alone. He travels on foot: a staff in His hand; poor raiment on His body. Where are you going, says the philosopher.—I am going to preach my doctrine.—Have you any particular object in view in preaching through the villages of Judea what you call your doctrine?—To convert the world.—To make the world abandon its gods, its religion, its manners, its customs, its laws, and adopt your maxims! You are then wiser than Socrates, more eloquent than Plato, who never imposed laws on a single town in Attica.—I do not proclaim myself a sage.—But who are you then?—I am known as the son of a poor tradesman in Nazareth.—But what secret means have you devised for the success of your undertaking?—Hitherto I have spent my life in my father's shop. For some little time I have been travelling through the country. A few disciples have joined me, and it is to them that I will intrust the care of establishing my doctrine among the nations.

But your disciples are men as distinguished by the nobility of their birth as by the superiority of their talents?—My disciples are twelve fishermen, who are acquainted with nothing but their boats and their nets—twelve Jews, and you know how much the Jews are despised by all other peoples.—But you rely on the protection

of some powerful monarch?—I shall have no more bitter enemies than the great ones of the earth: they will do their utmost to destroy my doctrine.—But you have immense riches; and, by making a display of gold before the eyes of the peoples, I can imagine it easy to win adorers?—I have not whereon to rest my head. My disciples, poor by their birth, will be still more so by my command: they will live on alms, or by the labour of their hands.

But it is on your doctrine itself that you ground your hopes of success?—My doctrine! It rests on mysteries which men will account folly. I intend, for example, to have my disciples announce that it was I who created heaven and earth; that I am both God and man at the same time; that I was born of a virgin; that I died upon a cross between two thieves (for this is the way in which I am to close my life); that three days afterwards I arose again from the dead, and at length ascended into heaven.—But at least your moral code is very convenient: doubtless it flatters all the passions?—My moral code! It opposes all the passions, condemns all vices, commands the most austere virtues, and punishes the very thought of evil.—But you promise some splendid reward to those who embrace it?—I promise them during this life contempt, hatred, prisons, scaffolds, death in a thousand forms; after this life, a reward which the mind of man cannot conceive.

But in what places, or to what class of people, do you intend to teach such a strange philosophy? Doubtless to a few ignorant people, like those whom you call your disciples?—My religion will be preached at Jerusalem, before the members of the Synagogue; at Athens, before the members of the Areopagus; at Rome, in the very palace of the Cæsars; everywhere, before kings and peoples, in town and country, to the ends of the earth.—And do you expect to succeed?—Undoubtedly. I shall soon be acknowledged everywhere as the God of heaven and earth. The world will change its face; idols will fall to the ground; peoples will flock in crowds to embrace my doctrine; kings will prostrate themselves before the instrument of my death, and think a representation thereof the most beautiful ornament of their crowns. Everywhere I shall have temples and altars, priests and adorers.—Begone, begone, poor idiot! Go back to your father's shop: your project is the height of extravagance!

Philosophy would have been right. Yes, I maintain that, in the eyes of common sense, to undertake the conversion of the world with a dozen fishermen, in the age of Augustus, regardless of all human opposition, must have appeared a most foolish project: its execution plainly transcended all human powers. And yet history, profane history, is at hand to bear witness that this project was

executed in the manner and by the means which Jesus had foretold. Therefore it was a divine project.

When infidels have exploded this fact, they will have a right to treat us as weak-minded because we admit the divinity of Christianity: until such times we shall return, as belonging to them alone, the reproaches that they address to us.

If the philosopher himself of whom we have just spoken were now to revisit the earth, and to see the religion of Jesus Christ reigning everywhere, would he doubt of the miracle of its establishment? Would he not exclaim in a transport of admiration, "All this is far above human strength; therefore it is the work of God"? However, let us not yet accept the explanation of philosophy; let us wait until we see in the next lesson whether it be possible to find any other.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given me in the establishment of Christianity an irrefragable proof of my Faith. Grant that, ever standing on this immovable rock, I may despise all the efforts of the wicked, as well as of my own passions, to shake my belief.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will pray for the conversion of unbelievers.*

LESSON XXII.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED.

Facts that result from the Establishment of Christianity. Twofold Explanation of these Facts. Annihilation of every Objection raised against Religion; or rather every Objection turned into a Proof of Religion.

We have related the *natural* history of the establishment of Christianity, as we have related all other ordinary facts, without expressing our final judgment as to the human or the divine cause of this revolution, the most amazing ever chronicled. It is time to remove all uncertainty on a point so fundamental. Now, from what has been said the following facts result, of which some are attested by the common declaration of Jews, Pagans, and Christians, whose words it is impossible to dispute without striking a fatal blow at all historical certainty, and others are plain to all eyes:—

First Fact: Eighteen centuries ago the world was pagan.

Second Fact: To-day the world is Christian.

[1] Incredibile, ergo divinum. (Tertull., *adv. Marc.*)

THIRD FACT: The conversion of the world is the work of a personage named Jesus of Nazareth, assisted by twelve men chosen from among the common people.

FOURTH FACT: Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, a Crucified Jew.

FIFTH FACT: A Jew, a Crucified Jew, was the most detestable object under heaven. In the time of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jews were ridiculed and scorned by the public, as we learn from pagan authors, such as Horace, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Martial. No time, no revolution, no human effort, has ever been able to change opinion on this point. For many centuries, when any person has wished to paint with one stroke a usurer, a rogue, a traitor, it has been enough to say, He is a Jew. The Jew himself is ashamed to be called a Jew, so degrading does he feel his name; and he seeks another instead of it, that of Israelite, a name more honourable, because less used. Jesus of Nazareth was not only a Jew, but a crucified Jew. Now, he who says a "Crucified Jew" says all that is most vile and infamous, the disgrace of the human race, the outcast of nations.[1]

SIXTH FACT: FOR THE LAST EIGHTEEN HUNDRED YEARS THE WORLD HAS ADORED A CRUCIFIED JEW. Thus, for the last eighteen hundred years, the world has been witness to a fact that reaches the furthest limits of absurdity: a worm of the earth on the altars of the human race! And this fact the world itself has freely brought about, at the voice of twelve men of vile character, in spite of the reluctance of its dearest inclinations as well as the seductive attractions of a religion most easy and most agreeable!

SEVENTH FACT: To have the happiness and the honour of adoring this Crucified Jew, there were, during three hundred years, eleven millions of martyrs, of all ages, ranks, and countries, who cheerfully accepted death amid the most frightful torments. Since that period, millions of others have followed their example. It is still followed at the present day, whenever there is occasion. At all times, men, to have the same happiness and the same honour, do violence to their most tender affections, renounce their country and their family,

[1] Servorum, latronum, sicariorum, et seditiosorum supplicium crux erat, cui illi affigebantur, et in ea pendebant, donec fame, siti, doloribus enecarentur, post mortem suam canum et corvorum relicti cibus. Itaque supplicio illo non aliud apud Romanos infame magis, et acerbum magis. (Lamy, *Dissert. de Cruce*, § i, p. 573.) The Pagans used to say of the Christians, Qui hominem summo supplicio pro facinore punitum, et crucis ligna feralia eorum ceremonias fabulatur, congruentia perditis sceleratisque tribuit altaria, ut id colant quod merentur. (*Apud Minut. Fel.*, p. 22 et 23.)—Colitis hominem natum, et quod personis infame est vilibus, crucis supplicio interemptum, et Deum fuisse contenditis, et superesse adhuc creditis, et quotidianis supplicationibus adoratis. (*Apud Arnob.*, lib. I, n. 23, etc.)

bestow their goods on the poor, and consecrate their persons to the gratuitous service of the most loathsome misery.

Eighth Fact: While adoring a Crucified Jew, the world has advanced most amazingly in intelligence, in virtue, in liberty, in civilisation. Witness the little Christian child: it knows more of God and Providence, of man and his nature, his duty and his destiny, than the greatest pagan philosophers, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and Seneca. Witness the obscure Christian village, wherein there is more liberty for man, woman, and child, than ever was known in the whole pagan world. Witness all the peoples of Europe and America, who, formerly barbarians, have become, by adoring a Crucified Jew, the leaders of civilisation. In a word, look at the map of the world, and you will find enlightenment, liberty, and civilisation in every country that adores the Crucified Jew.

Ninth Fact: All the nations that do not adore the Crucified Jew lie buried in the darkness of barbarism, held fast by the chains of slavery, unable to move in the ways of civilisation. Witness the Chinese, the Indians, the Turks, the Arabs, the Negroes, the savages of Oceania. In a word, look at the map of the world.

Tenth Fact: No nation leaves its darkness, bursts its chains, walks in the way of progress, but by adoring the Crucified Jew. Witness all the nations that we have just mentioned. Witness universal history.

Eleventh Fact: Every nation that ceases to adore the Crucified Jew begins by losing its morality, its peace, and its prosperity, and ends by falling into the darkness of barbarism, by taking up again the chains of slavery, and by retrograding on the way of civilisation. Witness all the ancient nations of Asia and Africa, wherein ignorance vies with degradation, and the nations of Modern Europe, wherein everything is turning to trouble, hatred, disorder, and revolution.

Twelfth Fact: A Crucified Jew has maintained for eighteen centuries his place on the altars of the civilised world, notwithstanding the most formidable and continually renewed attacks of tyrants armed with axes, of philosophers armed with sophisms, and of perverse men in general armed with all the brutal instincts of corrupt nature. By a solitary exception in the annals of the world, he has held his ground amid the changes and ravages of centuries, which scores of times have swept away empires, republics, the most admirable systems, and the best established institutions. In a word, he has shown himself regardless of the inexorable law of death, which weighs on all human works and allows them only an ephemeral existence.

Such are the visible, palpable facts that result from what has been said in the foregoing lessons on the establishment of Christianity.

Twofold Explanation of these Facts.—How are these amazing facts to be explained? The thing is easy, reply all Catholics. The adoration for eighteen centuries of a Jew, a Crucified Jew, by all the civilised nations of the globe, is a mystery that turns the head of anyone who attempts to fathom it: quite true. The other mysteries of Christianity are no less wonderful: quite true. The observance of the laws of Christian morality evidently exceeds the power of nature: true, perfectly true. Yet we understand right well the adoration of a Crucified Jew, and the belief of the unfathomable mysteries of Christianity, and the practice of Christian morality, by all civilised nations: Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, God Himself. Almighty, He overcame with the weakest means the greatest obstacles. The Source of light and virtue, He poured on the docile world some of His divine gifts, and the world believed, and the world rose to high perfection. So long as it does not draw near to this God, the Principle of all that is excellent, it remains in darkness and degradation; when it withdraws from Him altogether, it relapses into its original abjection and misery. In a word, *God* was concerned. There was a miracle. Everything is explained!

Miracles are idle tales, reply the incredulous; they never had any existence but in the minds of impostors or simpletons.

Behold what we are told: the world was converted without miracles. Consequently, Jesus of Nazareth was not the Son of God, but merely a Jew like any other; the twelve apostles were twelve fishermen like any others: God was neither with Him nor with them. Such then is the way in which you solve the problem. You say, "Given a Crucified Jew, with twelve fishermen sent by Him to preach his doctrine, evidently the world must be converted, and must adore, as the only God of heaven and earth, that Crucified Jew. There is a striking connexion between the effect and the cause. There is nothing supernatural in the matter: it is most simple; it is exactly conformable to the laws of nature. The experiment may be renewed as often as desired." We accept this solution, the justness of which will clearly appear in its consequences.

First Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that a Crucified Jew, aided by a dozen of the common people, without learning, without money, without protection, without credit, should, in the full light of the Augustan age, have forced the whole world to break its gods in pieces, to burn its temples, to change its laws, and to adore as the only God of heaven and earth him alone—a Jew crucified between two thieves as the most guilty of the three. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Second Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that, during the space of three hundred years, eleven millions of men and women—rich and poor, princes and senators, generals and consuls—in Asia, Africa, Greece, Italy, Gaul, Spain, Germany, over the face of the globe, should have let themselves be mangled, burned, hacked, drowned, in order to have the happiness and the honour of adoring, as the only God of heaven and earth, a Crucified Jew. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Third Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that, during the course of eighteen hundred years, the world, despite the progress of intelligence, should not have laid aside its blindness; that, on the contrary, millions of other men and women, in the East and the West, should have continued to let themselves be slaughtered, while a still greater number should have renounced their riches, their liberty, and their families, and devoted themselves to the most painful labours and the most bitter privations, in order to have the happiness and the honour of adoring, as the only God of heaven and earth, a Crucified Jew. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Fourth Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that the world should have become much more enlightened, more virtuous, more free, more civilised, more perfect in every way, by professing an absurdity carried to its highest pitch, that is to say, by adoring, as the only God of heaven and earth, a Crucified Jew. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Fifth Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that, if any portion of the world refuses to adore, as the only God of heaven and earth, a Crucified Jew, it should remain, by reason thereof, in a frightful abyss of barbarism, corruption, slavery, and misery. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Sixth Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that a degraded portion of the world should leave its wretchedness, and begin to walk in the ways of liberty, civilisation, and peace, as soon as it adores, as the only God of heaven and earth, a Crucified Jew. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Seventh Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that any nation, ceasing to adore faithfully and fervently, as the only God of heaven and earth, a Crucified Jew, should immediately begin to lose its enlightenment, its morality, its tranquillity, and its prosperity, in order to fall again, after passing

through a series of revolutions, under the galling yoke of despotism and barbarism, from which the adoration of a Crucified Jew had rescued it. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Eighth Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that a Crucified Jew, making one leap from the gibbet on which he had just expired to the altars of the whole world, should have maintained his place thereon immovably for eighteen hundred years, notwithstanding all the efforts of craft and power and irritated passion against him, and while empires and monarchies and republics and institutions were again and again crumbling to pieces around him. All this is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood.

Ninth Consequence: It is most conformable to the laws of nature and logic that all peoples, who, during four thousand years, expected from heaven a liberator who would re-establish on earth the kingdom of truth, justice, and virtue, should have recognised as the object of their hope a Crucified Jew, and should have ceased to expect any other; that God, who is nothing at all if not infinite goodness, truth, and power, should have permitted, without interference, without opposition, this Crucified Jew to turn to his own profit the faith and the adoration of the world; that this Crucified Jew should have performed all the works of God—enlightened, consoled, and delivered mankind, made the human race better and happier—and yet was neither God Himself nor the envoy of God, but a notorious impostor, a wretch deserving of a death a thousand times more infamous than that which he met. All this, you say, is most simple, most natural, most logical, most easily understood: there is not the shadow of a miracle about it!

You add that the experiment may be renewed as often as desired, and you are right. In effect, if the conversion of the world by a Crucified Jew, assisted by twelve fishermen, is the result of the laws of nature, it suffices, as the laws of nature exist always, to set them in operation in the same manner and with the same conditions to obtain the same result. Such being the case, I have only one question more to put to you, and one favour to ask of you.

My question is this: As the world was converted by Jesus of Nazareth without a miracle, and solely in virtue of the laws of nature, will you tell me why no other person has ever attempted an experiment like his, with the same difficulties, the same means, the same results?

As for the favour I ask of you, it is this: In order to show me as clearly as that two and two make four that the conversion of the world by a Crucified Jew was a thing most natural and most logical,

be so good as to let me see a repetition of the experiment. Assuredly there never was an enterprise more worthy of a great heart. Your ardent philanthropy, your deep compassion for the human race, so long bowed down under the vile yoke of superstition, will not—I call your words to witness—let you shrink at any sacrifice. The particulars of the problem are known to you.

Some fine morning, you go down accordingly to the banks of the Loire, you call a dozen fishermen around you, and you say to them, "My friends, leave your boats and your nets here; come, follow me." They follow you. You ascend *Montapins*[1] with them, and, retiring to a quiet place, make them sit down on the grass.

You then speak to them thus:—"You all know me. You know that I am a carpenter by trade, and the son of a carpenter: for thirty years now I have been working in my father's shop. Well, you are mistaken: I am not at all what you think. I am God. It was I that made heaven and earth. I am going to convert the world, and to have myself adored instead of the Crucified Jew. I should like to associate you with me in my glory. Here is my plan. I will begin by travelling about for some time, preaching and begging through the country. I shall be accused of various crimes, and I intend to manœuvre so well that I shall be condemned to death and led to the scaffold.

"A few days after my death, you will walk through the streets of Nevers. You will stop the passers-by, and say to them, 'Did you hear the news? Such a carpenter, whom you knew so well, who was accused of such and such crimes, who was condemned at the last assizes, who was beheaded a few days afterwards, that man was the Son of God. He told us to tell you so, and to command you to adore him along with us; otherwise, you should go to hell. To have the happiness and the honour of adoring him, you must all—men, women, and children, rich and poor—begin by acknowledging that you, your ancestors, all civilised peoples, were most grossly deceived in adoring a Crucified Jew. You must then fall on your knees at our feet, tell us all your sins, even the most secret ones, and perform the penance that we shall think proper to impose on you. Afterwards, you shall let yourselves be insulted by the whole world without saying a word in reply, cast into prison without making the slightest resistance, and at length put to death in the public square by the common executioner, and you shall believe all the while that nothing more fortunate could happen to you.'

"These are the things which you shall say from one end of the land to the other. I must not dissemble with you. The world will

[1] A hill near Nevers.

despise you. Many will say that you are drunk. It is all one: speak on. Crowds of children will run after you, shouting, and throwing stones at you: this will raise disorder in the city. You shall be arrested, and forbidden to preach my divinity: never mind, preach more energetically than before. You shall be arrested again, and scourged: let yourselves be scourged. You shall be put in prison: let yourselves be put in prison. Last of all, to make you be silent, your heads shall be cut off: let your heads be cut off. All will be for the best.

"When this storm is over, we shall be completely successful. The whole world will want to be converted. As for me, I shall be acknowledged truly God: I shall be adored at Nevers; afterwards, at Paris, at Rome, at London, at Petersburg, at Constantinople, at Pekin. In a short time my father's shop will become a pretty little chapel, whither pilgrims will flock from the four corners of the earth; and their rich presents will be the pride of my native city.

"As for you, you shall be my twelve apostles, twelve saints invoked by the whole world. Your bones shall be laid on altars, and your statues fixed in niches. Your images, beautifully painted on banners, shall be carried in procession, not only here, but everewhere; not only for a year, but to the end of time: and you shall advance straight to immortality. What an honour for you, your wives, and your children! To convert the world is not more difficult than I have said; and such is my project. It is, as you see, most simple, most easy, most conformable to the laws of nature and logic. I may rely upon you: may I not?"

How such a discourse would be received, we can make a fair guess. I hear our brave fishermen, indignant at being treated to such an amount of mystification, loudly reproach its author by word and gesture, perhaps by means of something heavier. I see them going down to the city, and telling everywhere that such a one's head is turned. And I shall learn without surprise that the new god has been led the same day to the Charity Asylum, erected at the public cost, where he may enjoy, instead of divine honours, the undisputed privilege of holding the first place among fools.

Now, let us be careful to remark that the project of the carpenter of Nevers, which is undoubtedly the height of folly, is not more absurd than that of Jesus of Nazareth, if Jesus of Nazareth was only an ordinary mortal, born and bred in a carpenter's shop, acting alone and without the help of splendid miracles. What do I say? It is far less absurd. A carpenter of Nevers would be a better man than a carpenter of Nazareth. A guillotined Frenchman would not be inferior to a Crucified Jew. A dozen fishermen from the Loire

would be as good as a dozen fishermen from the little lakes of Judea. To cause a French citizen of the nineteenth century to be adored ought to be incomparably easier than to cause a Jew of the Augustan age to be adored. In the former case, it would be enough to detach the peoples from a religion that is a sworn enemy of all the passions, continually leagued together to shake off its yoke, and always on the look-out for something to set them free. In the latter it was necessary to detach the peoples from a religion that flattered all the passions, and that numbered as many formidable auxiliaries as there are evil instincts in the human heart.

Considering the establishment of Christianity only in regard to the difficulty of the undertaking and the weakness of the means, while admitting Christianity itself as a reasonable system, you see that a person reaches in a few steps the last degree of the ridiculous, if he attempts to explain it by purely natural causes. Yet there is no effect without a cause, and, whatever you may do, Christianity is a fact. Since there is no human cause that can explain its establishment, we must, therefore, unless we admit an effect without a cause, recognise therein a divine cause. God is therefore concerned in it. But if God is concerned in it, Christianity is therefore true, alone true, wholly true, always true. Since Christianity is true, all objections against Christianity are false; for there cannot be contradictory truths about it. Therefore, in presence of the single fact of the establishment of Christianity, all past, present, and future objections against the faith, the morals, and the worship of Christianity fall to the ground, like the ball of a fugitive Arab after striking against a pyramid of the desert. Therefore, we may and should despise them without any exception, and dispense ourselves from answering them.

To strike down all objections with one blow, is thus the grand advantage of the fact of the establishment of Christianity.

Every Objection turned into a Proof.—The single fact of the establishment of Christianity not only renders all objections null, absolutely null, but it turns them into proofs: this is what we are now going to show. Impiety has long enough had a free sweep against Religion: we may well be permitted to make some reprisals, and to turn its own arms against itself. The unbeliever has often enough transformed the Christian into an idiot: can the unbeliever take it ill if the Christian transforms him into an apologist?

In the eyes of unbelievers, Christianity is not even a reasonable system. They find it to contain a multitude of things which, by their account, are offensive to good sense. Their objections against dogmas attack the very existence of Our Lord, whom they regard as a myth, and the twelve Apostles as the twelve signs of the zodiac.

They attack all mysteries, which they consider a tissue of dreams and absurdities, useful only for amusing or alarming ignorant people, women and children. Whence they conclude that God, being truth itself, could not have revealed such things.

As for morals, unbelievers maintain that they are a tissue of laws and practices some of which are antiquated, useless, arbitrary, superstitious, and others are impossible of observance, are even contrary to the most lawful inclinations of nature and the imprescriptible rights of human liberty. Whence they conclude that God, being infinitely wise and just, could not have been their author. Thus, absurdity on the one hand, impossibility or inutility on the other: this is the sum total of what unbelievers have to say against Christianity. To this twofold attack on dogmas and morals, let us present a twofold defence, a victorious defence, supplied by incredulity itself.

Attack on Dogmas. We have just seen, and pretty clearly seen, that, even admitting Christianity as a reasonable system, it is impossible to explain its establishment by human means: that recourse must necessarily be had to miracles, and to miracles of the most striking character. You now say that Christianity is not even a reasonable system: that its dogmas are false, incredible, absurd in many points. You therefore increase immensely the difficulty, already so great, of securing its acceptance. You therefore demonstrate with new force the existence, the necessity, the abundance, the splendour, and the power of those miracles which convinced the whole world. The more objections you raise and the more strength you add to them, the more you also increase the difficulty of the enterprise; consequently, the more clearly you demonstrate the certainty and the omnipotent virtue of those miracles which bowed to the yoke of Faith the proudest minds, nay, all minds.

You demonstrate all this to me, who have no doubts, but who am delighted to see you changed into an apologist. You demonstrate it to yourself, who must soon cease to doubt; for your own language is as follows:—

"The objections that I raise against the dogmas of Christianity are not new. They were all raised, and others besides, at the very birth of Christianity, by heretics and pagan philosophers.[1] Not one Christian mystery that has not been attacked by science, by history, by all sorts of objections, with an ability never surpassed; that has not been travestied, distorted, laughed at in theatres, and held up

[1] It has been proved that not a single new objection has been raised against Christianity since the end of the fourth century.

to the scorn and ridicule of people who were hearing of it for the first time. If then, in spite of my education in a Christian land, in spite of the example of so many great men who have believed, of so many persons no less enlightened than myself who continue to believe, in spite of a public possession for eighteen centuries, the dogmas of Christianity appear so absurd, so contrary to reason, that I find it impossible to believe them, what must they have appeared to the pagan world but a stumbling block to the noblest geniuses, and a folly to excite sarcasm, and to provoke laughter? The more I feel the force of objections, the more clearly do I see this scandal and folly rising before my eyes, and, consequently, the impossibility under which the pagan world laboured of giving its adherence to Christianity.

"Yet these Christian dogmas, which appear to me a most ridiculous mixture—a heap of absurdities, contradictions, and impossibilities—the world believed, and believed on the word of twelve Jewish fishermen. It believed them in the Augustan age, that is to say, in the brightest age, according to common opinion, of philosophy, eloquence, and art.

"It believed them in spite of warnings a hundred times repeated by heretics and philosophers, who kept shouting into its ears all, absolutely all, that I myself say about the dogmas of Christianity being only a tissue of contradictions and absurdities.

"It believed them in spite of Nero, Domitian, Diocletian, and many other tyrants; in spite of lions, bears, and tigers; in spite of burning piles and iron hooks.

"It believed them everywhere over the globe, at Jerusalem, at Athens, at Rome, in the East and in the West. It was not merely the lower orders of society that believed them, that professed them in the face of executioners, but the higher, the richer—consuls, senators, generals, philosophers themselves—who had begun by attacking them. It was all classes and all ages, from first to last.

"What means are there to explain this stubborn fact? One or other of two: a madness or a miracle. A miracle I do not admit: if I did, I should be a Catholic. A madness: but who was affected by it? Am I quite sure that I am not mad myself? Am I quite sure that I alone out of the whole world have reason on my side? Am I quite sure that I alone am wise, that I alone am enlightened, among mortals? Can I justly confide in objections that seem totally devoid of foundation to the rest of men, and that would perhaps seem the same to myself, if my heart did not lead my mind astray? I think myself wise, and the whole world tells me that I am deceived, deceived by silly errors. Does the world ever speak true? Assuredly: to doubt this would be folly.

"Such is therefore the result in which all my objections against Christianity end. I have managed them so well that they have all become crushing proofs, so that I find myself enclosed by an iron circle, from which there is no escape but by one or other of two means: a madness or a miracle. I must be either a fool or a Catholic."

Attack on Morals. All the objections, all the rebellions of nature and passion, against the precepts of the Gospel tend to show that these precepts are useless, impracticable, antiquated, contrary to reason, contrary to man's lawful liberty, or at least that it is immaterial how we take and leave in regard to them. If such is the case, what follows? Again the proof of the existence, the necessity, the abundance, the splendour, and the power of those miracles which obliged the world to bow its head to the yoke of Christian morality! The more objections you raise and the more strength you add to them, the more you also increase the difficulty of the enterprise; consequently, the more brightly you cause the virtue of those miracles to shine forth which triumphed over the resistance of the whole world.

Here the unbeliever finds himself again transformed into an unwilling apologist; for he is compelled to speak thus:—

"The morals of Christianity were the same eighteen hundred years ago as they are to-day. Now, these morals I find in many points useless, optional, antiquated, impracticable, contrary to my reason and liberty. It is I myself that use this language, that proclaim my freedom to choose among these precepts whatever may suit me, and to reject whatever may not suit me! Who, then, am I, I, born within the pale of Christianity, accustomed from childhood to regard the evangelical law as a divine law, in all points obligatory; I, always surrounded by examples that preach to me the absolute necessity of practising the morals of Christianity, and the possibility of doing so?

"If, in spite of all these things, they appear to me useless, optional, impossible, with how much more reason must they have appeared so to the pagan world, buried in pleasures of sense, when they were first announced to it! How then did so many young people, flesh and blood like myself—for there was no want of them in East or West from the time of Nero to that of Diocletian—as weak, as much inclined to passion as myself, perhaps a little more so; how did so many men of every age, rank, and country—generals, writers, philosophers, lawyers, physicians, senators, merchants, magistrates, artisans, soldiers—all men like myself, accept as true, as obligatory, as possible, that morality which I declare false, optional, impossible?

"How did they submit to it so easily? How did they observe it in every point with such resolute perfection when, to do so, it was necessary not only to chain up passions strengthened from the cradle by contrary habits, encouraged by general example, consecrated by religion; to change all their ideas, tastes, and customs; consequently, to break fetters in comparison with which mine are only garlands of flowers; but also, still for the sake of trying to practise an impracticable morality, to agree to be disowned by their friends, despoiled of their property, loaded with sarcasms, scourged to blood, branded on the forehead with a red hot iron, sent to the galleys, expecting in the meanwhile, as their last consolation, to be roasted alive, or to be ground by the teeth of an African lion or a German bear, amid the applause of a whole people?

"Here again, what means are there to explain this stubborn fact? One or other of two: a madness or a miracle. I must be either a fool or a Catholic: no resource! Such, therefore, is the result of all my objections against the morals of Christianity. Step by step I have just demonstrated, better than all the apologists together, the imperative necessity and the absolute certainty of those miracles which overcame the most formidable opposition that ever existed: the weakness of the human heart, the passions of the whole world leagued against the virtues required by the Gospel. This demonstration has, moreover, the treacherous property of growing stronger in proportion to my resistance; that is, it grows stronger the more I feel the force of my objections, the more I stoop under the chains of my passions, the more I comprehend the need and the influence of those miracles which triumphed over the opposition of the human race, which made men accept and practise, at the peril of their lives, a code of morals of which no one knows better than I the impossibility. Therefore, no one has more motives than I to believe and to practise it. Therefore, unless I commit the most hideous of mortal sins, the sin of inconsistency, I must be a Christian in mind and in deed."

As for us, Catholics, we may draw wonderful advantage from the objections of unbelievers. Resting quietly on the splendid fact, THE WORLD ADORES A CRUCIFIED JEW, let us await without a stir the approach of the impious. Instead of being disturbed by their objections, let us do what the children of the world do at a play—watch, listen, and applaud.

When these unbelieving men have cavilled well, disputed well, wrangled well, spoken well, let us say to them, "Go on, gentlemen, go on; multiply and strengthen your objections: pile them up like mountains. Sap all the foundations of Christianity Annihilate prophecies. Deny miracles. Reject the divinity of

Jesus Christ. Transform Religion into a tissue of dreams, vanities, and impossibilities. The more absurd and impracticable you show it to be, and the more clearly you show that the Apostles were weak, ignorant, and contemptible, while Celsus, Porphyry, Voltaire, Rousseau, and all the other enemies of Christianity were wise, learned, and eloquent, the stronger you make my faith and the more evident you make your own folly; for it was never better demonstrated that the adoration of a Crucified Jew by all the civilised nations of the globe is an inexplicable fact, evidently above all human power, and, as a consequence, evidently divine: *Incredibile, ergo divinum!*"[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given me an easy means of defending my faith. Help me to understand this means well, that I may be able to employ it successfully for myself and others.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will carefully study the proofs of Religion.*

LESSON XXIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED.

Means of Preservation: Priests, Saints, Religious Orders. Means of Propagation: Missions. Character of Heresy. Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Council of Nice. The Church attacked: Arius. Judgment of God on Arius. The Church defended: St. Athanasius. The Church propagated: St. Frumentius in Ethiopia; Conversion of the Iberians.

After three hundred years of warfare, Christianity, victorious, took her seat with Constantine on the throne of the Cæsars. She was publicly proclaimed queen of the world. Her salutary action was felt everywhere: it regenerated man in his mind, in his heart, and in his body, by delivering him from the shameful slavery of error, crime, and despotism.

What has the Divine Founder of the Church now to do, but to preserve and extend His work, that all generations may profit by His benefits?

We say first to preserve it. The first care of the Saviour, after establishing the kingdom of the Gospel, will be to maintain and

[1] Tertull., *ad Marcion.*

defend it. But what! Can a Religion so holy, so true, so beneficent, have enemies? At the first glance it would seem impossible. We imagine that Christianity, after making so many improvements in laws, institutions, and public manners, should meet with none but obedient children and faithful disciples. Yes, so it would seem; but in reality it cannot be so.

The consequences of sin, in regard to man, are weakened, but not destroyed, by Christianity: the work of the Redemption shall be consummated only in Heaven. In the meanwhile—warfare! Intellectual warfare, *there must needs be heresies;* moral warfare, *there must needs be scandals;* physical warfare, *there must needs be public and private miseries!*[1] All these things are necessary, that our temporal life may be what God wished it to be after sin, a trial, and a meritorious trial, consequently a painful trial. The human race is like a warrior: it must maintain its union with the New Adam and advance towards perfection sword in hand.[2]

Hell and the old man will strive earnestly to render this conflict dangerous, and to destroy the work of Redemption in regard to peoples and individuals. Sometimes they will raise up heresies to change Christian truth, and to destroy the work of Redemption in the intellectual man.[3] Sometimes they will raise up scandals to substitute concupiscence for charity, the life of the senses for the supernatural life, and consequently to destroy the work of Redemption in the moral man. Lastly, the twofold crime of heresy and scandal, or other particular causes, will draw on peoples a deluge of evils– plagues, wars, revolutions, panics, oppressions—which will tend to destroy the work of Redemption in the physical man, by reviving the brutal right of might, and replunging the world into that state of abjection wherein it lay under Paganism.

At all these points of attack, the New Adam places His sentinels:—

1. *Priests.* A born defender, a general preserver of the work of Redemption against heresies, scandals, and physical miseries, the Priest will be at once a *teacher*, to guard the truth; a *model*, to give

[1] 1 *Cor.*, xi., 19; *Matt.*, xviii., 7; *Act.*, xiv., 21. [2] *Job.*, vii., 1.

[3] Every heresy bears in its very name a manifest proof of its falseness; for ts name is that of a man, and a man has no right to found a religion, or that of a country or a period, and any religion born of the ideas and manners peculiar to a certain country or period is evidently a human religion, that is to say, a false religion. Hence, various sects have at all times been seen ashamed of their name, and anxious to disguise themselves under some other, borrowed from the true Religion. This is the reason why Protestants have such a desire to be called *Evangelicals.* "I consent thereto," said a Catholic officer once; "I will give them the name of Evangelicals as that of Numidican is given to Scipio for having destroyed Carthage."

an example of all virtues, that is to say, of the practical love of supernatural goods, and thereby to hinder the disorderly love of creatures from recovering its sway over the human heart; and a *reliever of all human miseries*, to prevent by an indefatigable and universal charity the ruin of the work of Redemption in the physical man, by a return to pagan despotism and the sufferings attendant thereon.

2. *The Saints.* Sometimes the dangers will become greater: cruel wolves, more numerous and more ravenous, will roam round the fold. Then will God bring forth from the ever fruitful womb of His Church new auxiliaries for the work of reparation. Extraordinary Saints will appear from time to time on the day of battle. As hell can attack Christianity only in three ways—in the intellectual man by error, in the moral man by scandal, and in the physical man by a return to pagan servitude and abjection—there will be three kinds of Saints, and only three: namely, *Apologetic Saints*, to defend and propagate the truth; *Contemplative Saints*, to recall our hearts continually to the love of supernatural things; and *Infirmarian Saints*, to solace the physical man, and to prevent him from relapsing into that state of misery and slavery in which paganism had held him. We shall see that all these Saints, appearing at the very moment when the need of their presence is most keenly felt, are a sensible proof of the continual action of Providence in regard to the Church.

3 *The Religious Orders.* Lastly, there will occur in the life of the Church some dreadful periods, when one would say that the powers of hell were about to prevail. Heresy, scandal, and injustice, leagued together, will attack Religion at every point. The conflict will be long and fierce—a general engagement: never did the world run such dangers before. It is in this extremity that God will draw forth from the depths of His love some new auxiliaries for Religion: we refer to the Religious Orders. There will be three kinds of them: namely, *Apologetic Orders*, for the defence and the teaching of the truth—they will appear to us in town and country, preserving the good doctrine by their learned writings or spreading it by their words; *Contemplative Orders*, for the defence of charity—you will see them, by a noble contempt of all sensible things, raising human love towards supernatural goods, making voluntary expiation as a counterpoise for scandal, and preventing concupiscence from recovering its sway; and lastly, *Infirmarian Orders*, for the relief of all human miseries—we shall find them posted at every point where hell may attack the work of Redemption in the physical man. How beautiful then, O my God, is Thy holy Religion, regarded in her means of preservation! Like the tower of David, a thousand bucklers hang upon her walls, a thousand sentinels watch day and night for her protection.

Priests, Saints, Religious Orders: such are the three means established by the New Adam for the maintenance of Christianity These three means may be reduced to one, which is the Church; for it is in the Church and by the Church that Priests are consecrated, that Saints are formed, and that Religious Orders are established.

Here is Christianity provided with all the means of its preservation: what remains but to propagate it? For God wishes that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth.[1] The means of its propagation are Missions: wonderful expeditions, heroic conquests, whose history we shall relate as we meet them on the way!

Let us now return to our subject, and set out with the Church. O divine spouse of the Man of Sorrows, expect to share His destiny! On thy brow, as on His, there must shine an immortal crown of thorns. This is the diadem by which thou must be known, till the end of time, as His lawful spouse. In vain will the sects wish to deck themselves with thy other ornaments: never will it be given them to wear the robe of martyrdom or the mantle of persecution.

The amphitheatres are still stained with the blood of thy children, and the piles for burning them still smoke. We can still hear in the distance the roar of angry lions, unchained to devour them. Thou breathest a little after so many conflicts, and lo! a new enemy, a daring sectary, rises up in Egypt, and advances to strike at thy heart: it is Arius. He dares to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. Fear not, tender spouse of the Man-God; the champion of falsehood will be met by a defender of truth!

The fourth century, which begins with the fiercest of persecutions, continues with the most dreadful of heresies. The devil, seeing Religion established in spite of the efforts of the tyrants whom he has armed against the work of God, does not lose courage. He only changes his batteries. He undertakes to demolish the edifice whose erection he could not prevent. A new war is declared.

What a sight! A crowd of heretics fastened on every part of the edifice of Religion from the foundation to the roof—armed with sarcasms and calumnies—disfiguring, defiling, degrading—wielding the hammer of falsehood against the stones, striving to shake and break them, to hurl them down one after another, with a hardheartedness and perseverance never since imitated in history but by the philosophical Vandals of the last century, who scattered among us the remains of our temples and our palaces, after holding up to scorn our dogmas and our devotions! Look again, and see what a multi-

[1] 1 Tim., ii. 4.

tude of doctors, clad in the armour of genius, eloquence, and virtue, advance from the East and West, and throw down the heretics, sometimes confounding them, sometimes converting them, always dashing to pieces their sophisms, and how the immortal edifice reappears in all its early beauty, ever firm on its basis!

Never was the war of error against truth more fierce than during the fourth century; and never did the Church show a richer array of doctors and apostles. This was properly the era of the Fathers of the Church. We shall, in a few words, make them known.

All those great men who appeared to defend the Church and to explain her doctrine during the first six centuries, are called the Fathers of the Church.[1] We divide them into two classes, the Greek and the Latin Fathers, according as they wrote in the Greek or the Latin language. The most illustrious among the Fathers of the Church, that is to say, those who wrote most and whose doctrine is most generally authorised and followed, bear the title of Doctors of the Church. There are four great Doctors of the Greek Church—St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. John Chrysostom; and five of the Latin—St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, and St. Thomas Aquinas. It was Pope St. Pius V. who gave to the Angel of the Schools the title of fifth Doctor of the Church.[2]

We call them *Fathers*, because Our Saviour, who filled them in a particular manner with His spirit, gave them to His Church to be her defenders and her counsellors, and to the world to be its oracles and its lights.[3]

"We call them *Fathers*, because their writings, full of the science of salvation," says St. Augustine, "were poured out as an abundant dew on the field of the Church, to make the germs of life that Jesus Christ and His disciples had left there fructify, in order to nourish souls with the purest substance of true doctrine. They carried mortar to strengthen, and rich ornaments to embellish, the sacred edifice, the Church built by Jesus Christ, who is its *Corner Stone*, and by the Prophets and the Apostles, who are its *imperishable foundations*."[4]

Joined with the Scripture, their works, consecrated by the sanction of the Church, add to the authority of the divine word—imme-

[1] Bergier, art. *Pères*.—It is generally said, however, that St. Bernard is the last of the *Fathers* of the Church.

[2] *Dict. des Sciences eccl.*, art. *Docteurs*.

[3] Luminaria mundi, sermonem vitæ continentia. (*Act. concil. Ephes. Labbe*, t. III., *Conc.*, p. 836.

[4] *Aug. contr. Julian.*, lib. II, c. x, n. 552

diately emanating from the Holy Ghost—the solemn weight of an inspiration at least indirect that produced them, and the efficacy of a special grace that so eminently distinguishes them from all human compositions.[1] They form that august chain of tradition whose splendid unity remains unbroken amid the shocks of revolutions, the attacks of schism and heresy, the ruins of time, the clouds of ignorance, and the ravages of immorality.[2]

As for their eloquence, we need not think of comparing any other with it. "What! A Father of the Church! A Doctor of the Church! What names! How sad are their writings, how dry, how cold, perhaps how scholastic! So speak ignorant and light-minded worldly people, who have never read them. But what a surprise it would be for all those who form to themselves an idea of the Fathers so remote from the truth, if they were to see in their works more elegance and delicacy, more courtesy and wit, a greater richness of expression and force of argument, a more brilliant touch and natural grace, than are to be found in most books of our day which are read with the keenest relish, and are intended to procure a name for vain authors! What a pleasure it is to love Religion, and to see it believed, maintained, and explained, by men of such noble genius and sound judgment, especially when we know that in regard to extent and depth of learning, application and development of the principles of pure philosophy, dignity of language, and beauty of sentiment, there is no one, for example, that we can compare with St. Augustine."[3]

The first that attempted to demolish the edifice of Religion after its social establishment was Arius. Guided by the infernal spirit, he aimed his strokes at the corner stone. This man, the author of the great heresy known under the name of Arianism, was born in Lybia. While still young, he passed into Egypt, where he was ordained deacon of the Church of Alexandria. Some seditious intrigues, in which he took part, obliged St. Peter, the patriarch of this Church, to cut him off from the number of the faithful. The holy patriarch knew too well the restless and ambitious character of the stranger, to let himself be deceived by an outward show of repentance. Hence, he would never receive him back into communion. He would not even pay regard to the earnest petitions with which he was met on his way to martyrdom. But Arius found a means of ingratiating himself with Achillas, the successor of St. Peter; he submitted outwardly, and affected deep sentiments of regret. Achillas was deceived: he received the hypocrite

[1] S. Bas.; see Duguet, *Conf. ecclés.*, t. II, p. 509.
[2] Guillon, t. I, p. 10.
[3] La Bruyère, ch *des Esprits forts.*

into the pale of the Church; he even raised him to the priesthood, and intrusted to him the government of one of the parishes of Alexandria.

Achillas dying, St. Alexander was elected his successor. Arius was much disappointed at this election, because his vanity had led him to believe that no one was so worthy of the patriarchate as himself. To have revenge, he began to dogmatise against the divinity of Our Lord. In vain did St. Alexander strive to bring him back by ways of gentleness. Arius seemed to have lost all feeling, and persisted obstinately in his error. Every day he was spreading it among the Faithful, and the evil was continually on the increase. The patriarch thought it was his duty to dissemble no longer. He excommunicated the heresiarch in a synod composed of all his suffragans,[1] and held at Alexandria in the year 319. He then informed all other Bishops of what had just occurred.

Meanwhile, Arianism was gaining ground on all sides. Constantine, afflicted at this division in the Church, resolved, by the advice of the Bishops, to assemble an *œcumenical*, that is to say, a *general*, council, to strike down the error and to check its followers.[2] Under the pagan emperors, no such great assembly could be held; but Constantine, having become the master of the empire, could execute a design so much in keeping with his piety; and we cannot fail to admire that Providence which then made the matter so easy, by uniting a vast number of countries under the rule of one man. The city of Nice was chosen as the place of the assembly, because it was near Nicomedia, where the emperor resided. Constantine therefore despatched to all the Bishops of Christendom letters of invitation, abounding in the most respectful expressions, and engaging them to come to the council. He also gave orders for the defrayment of all the expenses attending their journey. The affair

[1] The Bishops of an ecclesiastical province are called suffragans; they used to give their *suffrages* for the election of a metropolitan, and in some manner depended on him.

[2] A council is an assembly of the pastors of the Church, to decide questions regarding faith, morals, and discipline. A *general* or *œcumenical* council is one to which all the Bishops of Christendom are, in so far as it is possible, summoned, and over which the Sovereign Pontiff or his legate presides. A national council is one consisting of the Bishops of a single nation, as France or Spain. A provincial council is one held by a Metropolitan and the Bishops of his province. A synod is an assembly of the priests of a diocese presided over by the Bishop. Though the decisions of particular councils are worthy of great respect, those of general councils are alone infallible. We reckon eighteen general councils: two of Nice, four of Constantinople, one of Ephesus, one of Chalcedon, five of the Lateran, two of Lyons, one of Vienne, one of Florence, and one of Trent. (To this list may now be added the council of the Vatican. *Tr.*) We shall speak of them separately, as we meet them on our way.

was too important for the Bishops not to avail themselves of the convocation with the greatest eagerness. Hence, they soon met at Nice to the number of three hundred and eighteen—not counting Priests or Deacons. The venerable Osius, Bishop of Cordova, presided in the council as the representative of Pope St. Sylvester, who had also sent two Priests to it, not being able to go himself on account of his great age. St. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, was accompanied by the Deacon Athanasius, yet young, for whom he entertained a particular esteem, and by whom he was much assisted.

Never was there a more venerable assembly. Many of the Bishops composing it were eminent for their sanctity, and bore on their mutilated bodies the honourable marks of the persecutions which they had undergone for the Faith. Such, among others, was St. Paphnutius, Bishop of Upper Thebaid, whose right eye had been put out. The emperor often made him come to his palace: he felt great pleasure in conversing with him, and, to show his respect, used to kiss the wound that remained on the good man's face.[1]

To give an idea of the solemnity with which councils were held, we shall describe what occurred at that of Nice. The same thing, with some slight differences, required by circumstances, is renewed in all these august assemblies.

The 19th of June, 325, was the day selected for the opening of the council. The solemn moment having come, all the Fathers met in a large hall, adorned with a magnificence befitting the state of the Church, now freed from servitude, and protected by the great Constantine, the sole master of the world. In the centre of the hall stood a throne, richly ornamented, on which was placed the Book of the Scriptures, as representing the Holy Ghost who had dictated it, and who was about to explain it by the instrumentality of the Pastors to whom His perpetual assistance had been promised. The emperor went thither himself, clad in purple, and shining with gold and precious stones. He was accompanied, not by his guard, but by his ministers, who were Christians: he placed himself at the end of the hall, and there remained standing until the Bishops begged him to take a seat.

The discussion opened. Arius was present with his defenders: he set forth his errors, and did not fear to utter the most horrible blasphemies against Our Lord Jesus Christ. A sudden indignation seized on the assembly. Many, in order to crush impiety the sooner, wished to condemn it in general and without further discus-

[1] See Fleury, *Hist. abrégée de l'Eglise.*

sion, saying that they held to the Faith received from the beginning and perpetuated by tradition.[1] Others remarked that nothing should be done without full examination and mature deliberation. This is the reason why the more learned Bishops refuted so forcibly the impious novelties, relying on the Holy Books and on the writings of the Early Fathers. No one did so with such vigour and success as the young Deacon Athanasius: we shall soon make him known.

After many discussions, the council chose, in order to express the indivisible unity of the divine nature, the word *consubstantial*. It declared by this term that Our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, equal in all things to His Father, true God as well as the Father or the Holy Ghost. This word, which left no subterfuge for heresy, was ever afterwards the terror of the Arians. The president of the council accordingly prepared a solemn profession of Faith, known as the *Nicene Symbol:* it was written by Hermogenes, who became in the course of time Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. Its language is definite: We believe in one God, almighty, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ—the only Son of God—begotten of the Father, that is to say, of the substance of the Father—God of God—light of light—true God of true God—begotten, not made—consubstantial with the Father—by whom all things in heaven and on earth were made—who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, took flesh and was made man, suffered, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into Heaven, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

All the Bishops, with the exception of two, who were Arians, subscribed to this symbol, and pronounced an anathema against Arius and his followers. In virtue of this judgment, which the secular power upheld, but which it had not procured, the emperor condemned Arius to banishment and his books to the flames. Before separating, the Bishops addressed to all the Churches of the world a synodal letter, stating for their information what had been by them *proposed*, *examined*, *resolved*, and *decided*, in regard to the impiety of Arius. They sent at the same time a copy of the acts of

[1] Thus Bishops do not make new dogmas: they only bear testimony to existing truth. "What was the design of the Church in her councils?" says St. Vincent of Lerins on this subject. "She wished that what had previously been believed simply should be professed more exactly; that what had been preached without much attention, should be taught with more care; that what had been treated cautiously, should be explained more distinctly. Such has always been her design. She has therefore done nothing else by the decrees of her councils than place in writing what she had already received from the ancients by tradition."—(*Commonit.*, c. xxiii.)

the council to Pope St. Sylvester, who approved and confirmed them by his apostolic authority.

The end of the council occurring on the anniversary of Constantine's elevation to the throne, there was a magnificent feast to celebrate this happy event, and the no less happy issue of the assembly. The emperor wished to meet the Bishops in his palace and at his table. All were led with honour, between two lines of soldiers, into that very palace which was lately so much dreaded, as having sent forth so many cruel edicts against the Christians. The Bishops could hardly believe their eyes. All entered into the most private rooms, and took their places at table, some with the emperor, others apart on couches prepared for them: they imagined that they beheld an image of the reign of Jesus Christ. The emperor, after the banquet, saluted them individually, made them rich presents, and concluded by recommending himself to their prayers.

Such was the termination of this renowned assembly, the memory of which has always been held in veneration by the Church. St. Augustine, in particular, calls it the council of the whole world, whose decrees are of the same force as the commands of Heaven.

Meanwhile Arianism, though struck to the ground by the decision of Nice, was not destroyed. Arius, after three years of exile, found a means of obtaining his recall. He presented to the emperor a profession of faith so artfully composed that it was difficult to discover therein the error hidden under the guise of truth. The heresiarch returned triumphant to Alexandria; but St. Athanasius, the successor of St. Alexander, would not receive him to communion. Constantine, informed of the troubles caused by the presence of Arius in Alexandria, summoned him back to Constantinople, and inquired of him whether he followed the Faith of Nice. Arius swore that he did. Constantine, deceived, besought the Bishop of Constantinople to receive him to the communion of the Faithful; but this petition was deprived of its effect by an event which, handing over the victory to the Catholics, gave the whole world a splendid proof that the enemies of Jesus Christ, heresiarchs or persecutors, must all contribute to His glory and to the consolidation of His kingdom.

A Sunday had been chosen for the restoration of this impious man, in order to make the affair more brilliant. On Saturday evening, the impatient pride of the heretics induced them to lead Arius through the city in triumph. He himself, bidding high for their applause, poured himself out in audacious language. The crowd was immense, and increased from street to street. As they drew near the Constantine Square, and perceived at one end thereof

the temple in which the heresiarch should be re-established, Arius suddenly grew pale, in the sight of everyone, seized with a strange fear: he, at the same time, felt some call of nature. He retired into one of those public places multiplied in the New Rome with as much magnificence as other buildings, and there expired in the most cruel pain, yielding up with a large quantity of blood a portion of his bowels: this occurred in the year of Our Lord 336. A worthy end of one too like the perfidious Judas in his life not to resemble him in his death! This terrible conclusion, regarded as miraculous, caused as much dejection to the Arians as it gave encouragement to the Catholics.

Arius was dead, but his heresy was not dead. Timid in the beginning, and, as it were, stunned by the blow that had fallen on its chief, it soon grew bold again and set no limits to its haughty pretensions. The disturbed Church suffered many losses; but that God who had said that the gates of hell should never prevail against her was present, His eye was on all her wants. To strengthen her inwardly, He raised up the great St. Athanasius; to give her as many children outwardly as she counted apostates, He raised up St. Frumentius and his companions.

St. Athanasius, the scourge of Arianism, was born at Alexandria, of which he became Bishop after the Council of Nice. God, who destined him to contend with the most terrible of heresies—a heresy armed with all the subtleties of dialectics and the resources of emperors—had endowed him with all the gifts of nature and grace that would fit him for his high and difficult mission. Scarcely was he appointed to the see of Alexandria, when the Arians, furious at having been confounded by the holy patriarch in the council of Nice, accused him to the emperor of having imposed on the people a kind of tax, under pretence of providing for the wants of the Church, and of having sent a chest of gold to some conspirators. Athanasius was summoned before the emperor. The innocence of the holy patriarch was soon manifested, but the hatred of the Arians only became more violent: they worked so well with their artifices and their calumnies that they obtained against him a sentence of banishment.

Athanasius set out, and took up his abode at Treves with St. Maximin, Bishop of this city. At length, a council was assembled at Sardica, wherein the innocence of Athanasius was publicly recognised, and the holy pastor returned triumphant to his Church. The remainder of his life was spent in struggling with a continual series of persecutions on the part of the Arians, and in the practice of patience and every other virtue on his own part. This great man seemed the personification of the Catholic Faith. Heresy

always found in him a soul superior to human considerations. Like a rock, he could not be moved in favour of deceit or injustice This heroic firmness did not prevent him from being profoundly humble. No one carried the virtue of humility further than he: mild and affable, he would let even the least child have easy access to him. He joined to an unchanging goodness of heart a tender compassion for the miserable. He was fervent in prayer, austere in fasting, untiring in holy watches, full of condescension towards the lowly, and intrepid in the hour of danger.[1] He closed his life at a very advanced age, in order to be gathered to his fathers, the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Martyrs, after whose example he had generously fought for the truth.[2]

Athanasius was the oracle of the whole Church, as he has been that of all Christian ages since, which have placed him in the front rank of the doctors and heroes of the Faith.[3] The works which he left us are so precious, that an ancient monk was accustomed to say, "When you meet with anything from the works of St. Athanasius, write it on your habit, if you have no paper."[4] He died peacefully in the arms of his people on the 2nd of May, 363, after an episcopate of at least forty-six years, spent in continual troubles.[5]

While God strengthened the Church inwardly by the ministry of Athanasius, He propagated it outwardly, and thus repaired the losses that it sustained from heresy. A wonderful child was growing up in obscurity, and would, at the precise moment fixed for it, carry the sacred torch into foreign regions. The affair came about in this wise. A philosopher, named Metrodorus, made several journeys to satisfy his curiosity. He visited Persia, and the Great Indies, a name given by the ancients to Ethiopia. On his return,

[1] Greg. Naz., *Orat.* xxii, p. 378. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Vera Ecclesiæ columna. (Greg. Naz., *Orat.* xxi, p. 378.)

[4] *Prat. Spir.*, c. xl.

[5] The chief works of St. Athanasius are:—

1. An Exposition of the Faith: it is an explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, against the Arians.

2. An Apology, addressed to the Emperor Constantius: it is one of the Saint's most finished and eloquent works.

3. Four Discourses against the Arians: the arguments therein are so sound and strong that they crush the heretics.

4. A Life of St. Antony.

The Symbol that bears his name does not seem to have come from him. It is attributed to him probably because composed from his thoughts, and because it contains an explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, on which St. Athanasius wrote so well, and for the defence of which he showed so much zeal.

The best edition of his works is that by P. de Montfaucon, 3 vols., folio, Paris, 1698.

he presented to the Emperor Constantine some diamonds and other precious stones of the greatest beauty. Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre, encouraged by the success of Metrodorus, undertook a journey for the same purpose: he brought with him his nephews, Frumentius and Ederius, with whose education he was intrusted. His visit over, he re-embarked for his own country. The vessel that carried him and his nephews, still children, called at a port on her way to take in a fresh supply of provisions. The coast was inhabited by barbarians, who plundered the vessel, and put to the sword all belonging to it, except the two children. These, seated under a tree at some distance, were learning their lessons. The barbarians, finding them, were touched by their innocence, candour, and beauty They led them to the king, whose residence was at Axuma, which is now only a village of Abyssinia.[1]

The prince, struck by the intelligence and good dispositions of the two children, took particular care of their education. After a time he made Ederius his cup-bearer, and Frumentius his treasurer and secretary of state. Frumentius, who had the principal management of affairs, and who earnestly desired to make the Gospel known to the Ethiopians, engaged several Christian merchants, whom he found trading in the country, to settle there. He himself set out for Alexandria, in order to beg St. Athanasius to send a Bishop to complete the conversion of a nation remarkably well disposed. St. Athanasius held a synod, and all the Bishops composing it decided that no person could be better qualified than Frumentius to consummate the good work which he had begun · and he was accordingly consecrated Bishop of the Ethiopians Invested with the episcopal character, he returned to Axuma, where his sermons and miracles effected a great many conversions Perhaps no nation ever embraced Christianity more eagerly or courageously. The holy Bishop continued to instruct and to edify his flock till his last hour.[2]

While Frumentius was adding a nation to the domain of Jesus Christ, a missionary of another kind was employed on a similar task elsewhere ; for in the hands of God all means are good. This new apostle was a female slave Taken by the Iberians, a people bordering on the Black Sea, she won their admiration by the purity of her life, by her gravity, by her gentleness, by her assiduity in prayer. The barbarians, amazed, asked her what was the meaning of all this. She told them simply that she was a Christian and thus served her God.

Now, it was the custom of the country that, when a child was

[1] See Ludoff, *Hist. Æthiop* l. XI, c. xxxviii

sick, the mother should carry it from house to house, to inquire whether anyone knew of a remedy. A woman, having thus carried her child about everywhere in vain, came at length to the captive. The latter said that she did not know of any human remedy, but that Jesus Christ her God could restore health to the most hopelessly sick. She took the child, placed it on the hair-cloth that served her as a bed, prayed for it, and gave it back full of health to its mother. The fame of this miracle reached the ears of the queen, who was enduring great pain at the time. Being borne to the captive, she is placed on her hair-cloth, and, after invoking the name of the Lord, she rises in perfect health. Full of joy, the queen returns to the palace, and shares her happiness with the king her husband. The latter proposes to offer some presents to the captive. "The only reward that she desires," says the queen, "is that we should adore Jesus Christ, the God whom she invoked, and who cured me." The king delayed for some time: at length, in a serious danger, he promised to become a Christian. His prayer was heard, and he kept his word. The poor captive explained religion to them as well as she could; she also requested that a church should be built, and described its shape.

The king, having assembled his people, related to them all that had occurred in regard to himself and the queen. He instructed the men as far as possible in the truths of Faith; the queen, on her side, instructed the women: it was agreed to build a church. As the whole nation earnestly desired to know religion well, an embassy was sent, by the advice of the captive, to Constantine, in order to request him to procure Bishops who might complete the work of God. The emperor was delighted with the project: he felt more joy at the conversion of this people than at a great military conquest.[1] And we, too, ought not we to feel a great joy at it, since it shows us the goodness of Our Heavenly Father, who wills the salvation of all mankind, and the continual care with which Jesus Christ watches over His Spouse, and the tenderness with which He wipes away her tears?

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the admirable means which Thou didst adopt to preserve and to propagate our holy religion. Priests, Saints, Religious Orders, and Missions will be the object of my utmost gratitude and respect.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will pray for the conversion of heretics.*

[1] Fleury, l. XI, c. xxxix.

LESSON XXIV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

The Church defended: St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers. The Church propagated: St. Martin, Bishop of Tours. The Church attacked: Julian the Apostate. Judgment of God on this Prince. The Church defended: St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Basil the Great.

As Elias, when ascending to heaven, left his spirit of prophecy to his disciple Eliseus, so the intrepid Athanasius, after distinguishing himself in a series of combats—five times banished and five times recalled—left his spirit of faith to an illustrious Bishop. St. Hilary of Poitiers did the same in the West as the invincible Patriarch of Alexandria had done in the East. On these two great pillars rested the edifice of the Church, shaken by the Arians. Let us give the interesting history of our New Athanasius.

St. Hilary, who had the happiness of preserving the Gauls from the contagion of Arianism, was born at Poitiers, of an illustrious family. Brought up in paganism, he was led by degrees to a knowledge of the true religion, which he embraced with fervour. In the year 353, he was consecrated Bishop of his native city; and he no longer regarded himself as anything but a man of God. Sinners, moved by his words, entered into lively sentiments of compunction, and renounced their evil courses. However, he did not devote himself so earnestly to outward functions as to neglect his own salvation. He had hours set apart for prayer, and it was in this holy exercise that he continually renewed his fervour, and secured those abundant blessings which God poured out on his labours. His pen was also dedicated to the honour of religion. As the Emperor Constantius was endeavouring to spread Arianism through the West, St. Hilary presented to him an apology, for which he received in return a sentence of banishment.

Our Saint profited of his compulsory retirement to charge error with a vigour that all succeeding ages have admired. He wrote against Arianism his *Treatise on the Trinity*, in which he proves by the most solid arguments the consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He also demonstrates therein that the Church is one, and that all heretics are outside its pale; that it is distinguished from all the sects, inasmuch as, ever retaining its unity, it combats and confounds them all, and that it finds occasions of the most splendid triumphs in the divisions that are continually taking place among the followers of error. Nothing can be grander than the eulogies given to St. Hilary by St. Augustine and St. Jerome. The first

calls him an *illustrious doctor of the Church*,[1] and the second, a *river of eloquence*—a river which God removed from the world into the field of His Church.[2] St. Hilary, having returned from banishment, died at Poitiers in the year 368.[3]

While St. Hilary was strengthening the Church inwardly, one of his most eminent disciples was chosen by God to give this beloved Spouse as many children as she might be robbed of by heresy. This New Paul, the Apostle of the West, was St. Martin. An admirer of the virtues of St. Hilary, he was formed in his school, taking part in all his struggles for the Faith.

Martin was born of idolatrous parents at Sabaria, a city of Pannonia. God prevented this holy child with such a singular grace that, at the age of ten years, he went to a church in spite of his parents, and had his name enrolled among those of the catechumens. Meanwhile, there came an order from the emperor requiring the children of veteran officers and soldiers to bear arms. Martin, when fifteen years old, took the military oath, and entered the cavalry. The profession of arms, which is for so many an occasion of licentiousness, became for him an apprenticeship to the most heroic virtues. He particularly distinguished himself by a tender love for the poor: he could not refuse them anything, and whatever remained of his pay he distributed among them.

One day, says his historian, Sulpicius Severus, in the depth of a very severe winter, during which many persons died of the cold, he met at the gate of Amiens a beggar, almost naked, who asked him for an alms. This sad sight grieved the holy cavalier exceedingly; but he had nothing left save his arms and his clothes. He drew out his sword, cut his cloak in two, and gave one half to the poor man as a covering. Such a generous act did not pass without its reward. The following night, Martin saw in a dream Our Lord Jesus Christ clad with this half of the cloak, and heard Him saying to the Angels who surrounded Him, "It was Martin, still a catechumen, that gave Me this cloak."

This consoling vision made him decide on asking Baptism: he

[1] Lib. II, *adv. Jul.*, c. viii. [2] Lib. II, *adv. Rufin.*, p. 115.

[3] Some of the other works of St. Hilary are:—

1. Commentaries on St. Matthew.

2. A Book of Synods. This work throws great light on the history of Arianism. St. Jerome held it in such esteem that he made a copy of it with his own hand.

3. Books to the Emperor Constantius. The Saint therein asks the permission of the Emperor to justify the Catholic Faith in his very presence.

The Saint wrote several other works, in which he always appears worthy of himself. The best edition of his works is that by P. Constant, a Benedictine, Paris, 1693.

received it in his eighteenth year. At twenty years of age, he quitted the service, and directed his steps to St. Hilary. This great Bishop soon became acquainted with the extraordinary merits of Martin. He wished to attach him to his diocese and to ordain him deacon; but our Saint, out of humility, declined this honour, and would only consent to let himself be ordained exorcist. He next set out for Pannonia, where he converted his mother. Here he also did battle vigorously against the Arians. Returning to Gaul, he founded its first monastery. From time to time he used to come forth from his retreat in order to preach the Faith to idolators, who were still pretty numerous in the villages, and God authorised the zeal of His servant by splendid miracles.

He was not slow in becoming known everywhere throughout Gaul, and he was judged worthy of the episcopate. The people of Tours asked for him as their Pastor; but it was necessary to have recourse to a stratagem, and even to violence, in order to draw him from his solitude. Having come to the door of his monastery, to give his blessing to a sick person, he was seized, and led off to Tours under a strong guard. Martin was the same in the see of Tours as he had been in his first monastery. He dwelt in a little cell near the church. No change was to be seen in his dress or on his table. He was not acquainted with any other way of honouring his dignity than by his virtues. The destruction of idolatry was the usual object of his labours: he travelled many times through Touraine and all that part of Gaul, which he purified from every stain of paganism.

Being one day in a town, full of pagans, he overthrew the temple of the idols, and proposed to have a pine, which was also an object of idolatry, cut down. The pagans would not consent to it but on condition that he should place himself on the side towards which the tree would fall. Martin, full of faith, accepted the condition, and let himself be bound and placed where they chose. The tree was cut; but, at the moment when it was about to fall, the Saint made the sign of the cross, and the tree at once settled itself to fall on the other side, to the great amazement of the Pagans, who immediately asked to be baptised.

The holy Bishop did not interrupt his missions except for other works of charity. He sometimes went to intercede with princes on behalf of the unfortunate. It was for this purpose that he made two journeys to Treves, where the Emperor Maximus was staying. But he asked mercy as a Bishop, and with a dignity that should be felt even by princes. Maximus only conceived a greater esteem for him, and often invited him to his table. St. Martin declined this favour at first, but afterwards thought it his duty to

accept it. Maximus was so overjoyed, that he called as to a feast the most distinguished persons of his court—among them his uncle, his brother, and the prefect of the prætorium. Martin was placed beside the Emperor, and the Priest, who always accompanied him, was placed between the Emperor's uncle and brother.

During the course of the repast, an officer presented a cup as usual to the Emperor. The latter made a sign to present it to Martin, from whose hand he expected to receive it; but the holy Bishop, having drunk, presented it to his Priest, as to the most eminent person in the company. This action did not in the least offend the prince, who praised St. Martin for having preferred to all the imperial power the honour due to the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

The Saint returned to Tours, where he was received by his people as a Tutelar Angel. Though advanced in years, he lessened neither his austerities nor his apostolic labours. He continued till the end of his days to confirm by miracles the doctrine which he preached. His employments did not cause him to lose the sweet remembrance of the presence of God. Everything that he met supplied him with a new occasion of sanctifying himself or of giving to others a lesson on virtue: a precious example, of which it is easy for us to profit!

Seeing a sheep just shorn one day, he remarked pleasantly to those who were with him, "Here is a sheep that has fulfilled the Gospel precept. It had two coats: it gave one to him who had none. Let us do the same." At the sight of a man covered with rags and tending swine, he exclaimed, "Behold Adam driven out of paradise. Let us strip ourselves of the Old Adam, and clothe ourselves with the New." Another time he reached the bank of a river, where some birds were endeavouring to catch the fish. "This," says he, "is an image of what is done by the enemies of our salvation. They lie in ambush to seize our souls and make them their prey." He then commanded the birds to depart, which they did instantly. Having attained the age of ninety years, the Western Paul went to receive the crown due to him who fights valiantly and who keeps the Faith.

Let us cast a last look on the tomb of St. Martin, and beg of him to preserve from his lofty throne in Heaven that precious Faith which he planted in Gaul by his labours, and watered with his sweat: let us then pass on to the East. A new sight is about to be presented to our eyes. There is no longer enough heresy to attack the Church. No; but Paganism—that old Paganism, worn out and dead—strives to rise again from its tomb and to take back, if possible, the sceptre of the world, held by the steady hand of the Spouse of Jesus Christ.

Julian, a nephew of Constantine the Great, had come to the possession of the empire in the year 355. Seduced by pagan philosophers, and yielding to the clamour of his own passions, this prince abjured Religion publicly, and undertook the revival of idolatry. He declared a bitter persecution against the Christians: confiscated the property of all their churches; revoked all the privileges that had been granted to them; suppressed the pensions that Constantine had given for the maintenance of clerics, widows, and virgins; and forbade any Christian to plead at the bar or to hold an official position. He did not stop here. He would not let Christians teach literature, knowing the great advantages which they derived from profane books in combating irreligion Though he showed on every occasion a supreme contempt for the Christians, whom he called *Galileans*, yet he perceived the superiority given them by the purity of their manners and the splendour of their virtues, and continually pointed out their example to pagan priests. Such was the character of the persecution of Julian: some mildness and much mockery! He came to violent measures, however, when he found all others useless. Under his reign, a great many martyrs sealed their faith with their blood.

This impious prince, finding that his war did not attain its end quickly enough, resolved to strike down Christianity with one blow. For this purpose, he undertook to give the lie direct to Our Lord Himself, and, by convicting Him of imposture, to hold up His work to the scorn of all succeeding ages. But what are the counsels of man against the Lord? We shall see.

His chief design was to show the falsehood of the prophecies, especially that of Daniel, which announces the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem as irreparable; and that of the Saviour, which expressly declares that not a stone thereof shall be left upon a stone Julian accordingly undertakes to rebuild this edifice. He writes a most flattering letter to all the Jews, promising to aid them with all his might in raising again a temple on the spot where they so long adored the God of their fathers. At this news, the Jews run from all sides to Jerusalem They soon amass a considerable sum of money. The Jewish women give their trinkets and diamonds as a contribution for the expenses of the enterprise. The imperial treasury supplies the rest. The emperor himself brings together the ablest architects to be found in the various provinces of the empire, and intrusts the superintendence of the work to Alypius, his intimate friend, whom he sends to press matters forward on the spot. So much being done, an immense quantity of materials is collected. Day and night the work goes on with incredible ardour to clear out the site of the old temple, and to demolish whatever

remains of its foundations. Some Jews got silver pickaxes, shovels, and baskets made for this purpose. The most delicate women lent a hand, and carried off rubbish in their richest robes.

The clearance and demolition over, preparations were now being made to lay the new foundations: it was here that God waited for His enemies. Let us listen to an author whose testimony cannot be suspected—Ammianus Marcellinus, a zealous pagan, one who made Julian the hero of his history. "While Count Alypius," he says, "aided by the governor of the province, was earnestly urging on the work, terrible whirlwinds of fire burst out from the foundations, burned the workmen, and rendered the place unapproachable. Many attempts were made to return to the work; but, the fierce element always driving back the workmen with a kind of unappeasable obstinacy, the enterprise had to be abandoned."[1]

Such is the account of an historian who adored the idols of Paganism, and who was an admirer of Julian. What could drag such an acknowledgment from him, if not the force of truth? St. Gregory of Nazianzen, a contemporary author, adds that thunderbolts fell; that crosses of a blackish colour appeared on the clothes of those present; that many, pursued by the flames, tried to save themselves in a neighbouring church, but a sudden fire caught hold of them, consumed some, disfigured others, left on all the most evident marks of the dreadful power of God, which they had just dared to challenge. Efforts were still made to resume the work; but the fiery eruptions began again along with them, and ceased only when they ceased." "This," says the great doctor, "is a well-known fact, admitted by the whole world."[2]

Thus, as long as a few stones remain to be taken away from the old foundations of the temple, that is to say, as long as labour must be gone through to give the words of the Saviour their literal fulfilment, Julian is all-powerful; but, if he attempts to put back a single stone into those accursed foundations, he sees all his power and all his hatred frustrated. It is therefore true that every attack made on the Church turns to its glory and its triumph: this is a remark that we make once for all.

Julian, foaming with rage, swore in spite of his defeat to extinguish Christianity; but he wished in the first place to conclude a war against the Persians. He made immense preparations and innumerable sacrifices, and swore again, when setting out, to destroy the Church on his return; but God still knew how to secure it from his foolish threats. The emperor, taking part without a cuirass in the first battle, was dangerously wounded. As he was

[1] L. XXIII., c. i. [2] *Orat.* iv, *adv. Jul.*

raising his arm to encourage his troops, crying out, "All is ours!" he was struck by a dart. He then took in his hand some of the blood from the wound, and, throwing it up towards heaven, exclaimed, *Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!* This was the last cry of expiring Paganism. The following night, the 26th of June, 363, Julian died at the age of thirty-two years, a prince worthy of having Voltaire for his apologist.[1]

This sad death had been mysteriously foretold by a Saint living in those very times. A pagan, meeting him, asked scoffingly, *What is the Galilean doing now?* Without the least emotion, the Saint replied, *He is making a coffin.* Nowadays, as heretofore, the enemies of the Saviour, seeing the Church attacked, fettered, robbed, and despised, ask ironically in word and deed, *What is the Galilean doing now?* Without the least hesitation, we may answer them, *He is making a coffin.* A coffin for His enemies: a coffin in which they shall soon rot like their predecessors—emperors, philosophers, whole peoples, that have long since met their doom—while Christ reigns in the sepulchre that they hollowed out for Him!

It was not only with his sword that Julian fought against the Religion which he had abandoned, but also with his pen. Providence, however, raised up vigorous opponents to meet the crowned sophist.

One of the first coming before us is St. Gregory of Nazianzen. This Doctor of the Church, surnamed the *Theologian*, by reason of his profound knowledge of Religion, was born in the territory of Nazianzen, a little city near Cæsarea in Cappadocia. His father, Gregory, was a pagan; but he was converted by the prayers of his wife, St. Nonna. This virtuous lady consecrated her son Gregory to the Lord from the moment of his birth. He corresponded perfectly with the care that his parents took to form him to virtue. After completing his early studies, he was sent to Athens, in order to profit of the lessons given by the celebrated masters who resided in that city. He there contracted a close friendship with St. Basil, who had come like himself to finish his education.

We present, and all Christians will ever present, these two great men as perfect models of a friendship equally tender and holy. They were inseparably attached. On their guard against dangerous company, they associated only with such among their fellow-disciples as united the practice of virtue with the love of study. Never were they to be seen at profane amusements. They knew only two streets in the city, that which led to the church and that

[1] Voyez la *Vie de Julien*, par l'abbé de la Bletterie.

which led to the public schools. Their manner of life was very austere. They took nothing out of the money sent them by their families but what was indispensable to meet the wants of nature · the rest was distributed among the poor.

Gregory, preceded by a splendid reputation, returned to Nazianzen : his first care was to receive Baptism. From this moment, dead to the world and to all its charms, his only ardour was for the glory of God. To satisfy his desire of attaining perfection, he broke off all communication with the world, and went to rejoin St. Basil, who was living in solitude. Watches, fasts, and prayers were the delight of these two great men, who added to manual labour the chanting of psalms and the study of the Holy Scriptures. In the explanation of the divine oracles, they followed, not their own lights or their own private views, but the teachings of the ancient fathers and doctors of the Church.[1]

It was about this time that Gregory composed his famous discourse against Julian. He speaks therein with that strength which the Prophets used to employ, when, by the orders of God, they reproved either royal or plebeian criminals. His only object was to defend the Church against the Pagans, by unmasking the injustice, hypocrisy, and impiety of its most dangerous persecutor.

God did not permit this bright light to remain any longer hidden under a bushel. The Church of Constantinople had groaned for forty years under the tyranny of the Arians. The few Catholics who remained there, deprived of pastors and even of churches, addressed themselves to Gregory, with whose learning, eloquence, and piety they were acquainted, and earnestly besought him to come to their aid. Several Bishops joined with them, in order the more surely to obtain a successful issue to their prayers. After much resistance, Gregory was obliged to yield. To tell what he had to suffer from heretics in the see of Constantinople, is what we shall not attempt : it will be enough for us to know that the Saint opposed nothing to so many outrages but prayer and patience. His virtues and talents drew a great many persons around him. St. Jerome himself quitted the deserts of Syria in order to go to Constantinople. He ranked himself among the disciples of Gregory : he studied the Scriptures under him, and all his life long gloried in having had such a master.

Meanwhile, troubles were on the increase in the Church of Constantinople : a council was assembled to put an end to them. The holy patriarch showed on this occasion a magnanimity above all praise. Seeing that minds were greatly heated, he rose and

[1] Rufinus, Hist., l. II, c. ix, p. 254.

addressed the assembly thus: "If my election causes so many troubles, I am willing to submit to the fate of Jonas: let me be thrown into the sea to appease the storm that I have not raised. I never desired to be a Bishop and if I am one, it is against my will. If it seems expedient to you that I should retire, I am ready to return to my solitude, that the Church of God may at length have quiet. I only beg of you to unite all your efforts that the see of Constantinople may be filled by a person of virtue, with zeal for the defence of the Faith."[1]

After thus delivering his resignation, the Saint left the assembly and went to the palace. He cast himself at the feet of the Emperor Theodosius, and, having kissed his hand, said to him, "I am not come, sire, to ask riches or honours for myself or my friends, nor to solicit your bounty in favour of the Churches. I am come to ask permission to retire. Your majesty knows that I was placed in spite of myself on the chair of Constantinople. I am now odious even to my friends, because I look solely to the interests of Heaven. I beg you to approve of my resignation. Add to the glory of your triumphs that of settling the Church in peace and concord."

The Emperor was wonderfully struck with such greatness of soul, and it was only with much difficulty that he was prevailed on to grant the holy Bishop's earnest request. Gregory took his farewell in a beautiful discourse which he delivered in the great church of Constantinople, in presence of the fathers of the council and an immense multitude of the people.[2] He concluded by bidding farewell to his dear metropolitan church, to the other churches of the city, to the holy Apostles who were honoured therein, to his episcopal throne, to his clergy, to the monks and all other servants of God, to the emperor and all the court of East and West, to the Guardian Angels of his church and to the Blessed Trinity worshipped therein. "My dear children," he added, "keep the deposit of the Faith, and remember the stones that were thrown at me because I planted true doctrine in your hearts."

The Faithful followed him weeping, and imploring him to remain with them; but higher motives obliged him to carry out his design. He retired to the solitude of Arianza, where he spent the rest of his days, which were not very many; for he was then old and infirm. He had in his solitude a garden, a fountain, and a little grove, which enabled him to taste the innocent pleasures of the country. Here he practised all kinds of bodily mortifications: he often fasted and watched; he prayed much on his knees; he never saw a fire, nor wore any shoes; a simple tunic was his only

[1] *Carm.*, i. [2] *Orat.*, xxxii.

garment; he slept on straw, with a piece of sackcloth for his covering.[1] Amid these rude austerities, the great man set himself to write poems in refutation of the Apollinarist heretics. Such were his occupations till the hour of his blessed death, which happened in the year 389.[2]

Let us now speak of St. Basil, the new athlete whom God sent at the same time as St. Gregory to the relief of His Church. It would not be fit that we should separate in our history these two great men, whom the most cordial friendship united on earth, and whom the same glory now crowns in Heaven. St. Basil, surnamed the *Great*, by reason of his eloquence, learning, and genius, was born at Cæsarea in the year 329. He imbibed with his mother's milk the hereditary piety of his noble family. As for knowledge, he went in search of it to the ablest masters of Constantinople and Athens. He soon excelled in philosophy, in poetry, in eloquence, in every branch of literature. He possessed so fully the art of linking consequences with their principles, that no person could resist the force of his arguments: they were so well arranged that it would be more difficult to disengage oneself from them than to escape from a labyrinth.

Basil was regarded at Athens as an oracle, to be consulted on all matters of divine and human science. The students and masters of this great city, full of respect for his merits, tried every means imaginable to induce him to fix his abode among them; but they could not succeed. Basil thought that he was responsible to his native land for the talents which God had given him.

On returning home, he pleaded in some lawsuits with brilliant success. Then, to form himself to the most solid virtue, he retired

[1] *Carm.*, v et lx.

[2] St. Gregory's works consist:—

1. Of *Discourses*, to the number of fifty. Some treat of the mysteries of Faith and various points of Christian morality. The greater number are intended to defend the doctrine of the Church against the attacks of heretics. Others are panegyrics of martyrs, spoken on their festivals. He also wrote a eulogy of his illustrious friend, St. Basil.

2. Of *Letters*, to the number of two hundred and thirty-seven. Many of them are most interesting, and acquaint us in detail with the character of this great man.

3. Of *Poems*, charmingly written and most numerous.

According to some authors, Gregory is the greatest of orators, whether sacred or profane. He always thinks of things nobly, and expresses his ideas with inimitable delicacy. Glowing, flowery, majestic, his style contains a multitude of beauties that cannot be transferred to another language. His verses in keeping with his discourses, would deserve much better than those of Virgil, Homer, or Horace, to be the classical study of our schools. The works of St. Gregory are published in two volumes, folio: Paris, 1630.

to a desert, where he wrote his *Monastic Constitutions*. Worthy of the genius and the piety of its author, this book served as a rule for various founders of religious congregations, and placed St. Basil among the patriarchs of religious orders. As is known, these patriarchs are four in number: two for the East and South, St. Basil and St. Augustine; and two for the West and North, St. Benedict and St. Francis of Assisium.[1]

In his desert Basil founded several monasteries, as well for women as for men, and maintained a general inspection over them, even during his episcopate. After peopling the solitude with a multitude of human angels, and securing thereby an expiation of those numberless crimes which the heresy of Arius, and Paganism, revived by Julian the Apostate, were drawing in their train, Basil came at length to take part in the great conflict that hell had resumed against the Church.

In the year 370, he was raised to the archiepiscopal chair of Cæsarea. This nomination delighted the Catholics, who had a presentiment of the victories which Basil would gain over heresy. He began by feeding his lambs with the bread of his powerful word. The eloquent archbishop preached morning and evening, even on days when the Faithful had to attend to their ordinary work: his auditory was so numerous that he gave it the title of the *sea*.[2] He established at Cæsarea various practices of devotion that he had seen in Egypt, Syria, and other places—especially that of assembling every morning in the church to make prayer in common. The people communicated on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and all the Feasts of the Martyrs.[3]

His ardent zeal for the preservation of the Faith did not let him forget the sheep that were wandering in the paths of heresy: he sought their conversion by fervent prayers and continual tears. Nothing proves better the strength and activity of this zeal than the victory which he gained over the Emperor Valens.

The Arian prince, seeing Basil stand as an impregnable tower, against which the efforts of heresy were vain, resolved to proceed to extreme measures of severity with him. He sent Modestus, prefect of the East, with orders to engage Basil, either by threats or promises, to communicate with the Arians. The prefect, seated on his tribunal, and surrounded by his lictors, armed with their fasces, summoned the archbishop to appear before him. Basil came with tranquil and dignified mien. Modestus began with gentle words. Seeing this plan fail, he assumed a most threatening look, and said angrily, Do you think, Basil, that you can oppose so great an

1 Hélyot, t. I. 2 *Hexaem., homil.* ii et iii. 3 *Epist.*, 289.

emperor, whose orders the whole world obeys? Are you not afraid to feel the effects of that power with which we are armed?

Basil. How far does that power extend?

Modestus. To confiscation of goods, to banishment, to tortures, to death.

Basil. Threaten me with something else, for nothing that you have named makes any impression on me.

Modestus. What do you say?

Basil. I say that whosoever has nothing is secure from confiscation. I have only a few books and these rags that I wear: I suppose you will not be anxious to deprive me of them.

Modestus. But banishment?

Basil. It will not be easy for you to condemn me thereto. The whole earth is a land of exile to me: Heaven alone is my country.

Modestus. Well, you ought to fear tortures.

Basil. I fear them little. My body is in such a weak and sickly state that it cannot endure them long: the first stroke will end my days and my pains.

Modestus. And death?

Basil. I fear it least of all. It will be a blessing for me, since it will bring me to God, for whom alone I live.

Modestus. Never did any person speak to me in such a manner before.

Basil. Doubtless because you never met a Bishop before.

Modestus. I give you till to-morrow to make your choice.

Basil. Delay is useless: I shall be the same to-morrow as I am to-day.[1]

The prefect, quite disconcerted, went to the emperor, and said: We are conquered; the man is above threats. Valens left him at rest therefore for some time. Later on he wanted to sign a sentence of banishment against the Saint, but three times a reed, which was then used for writing, broke between his fingers. Alarmed at this occurrence, the prince tore up the paper, and never more disturbed the holy archbishop.

The moment when the labours of the vigorous athlete should be crowned at length drew nigh; he died on the 1st of January, 379, after saying, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." He was fifty-one years of age.

This great man had such a love for poverty that he did not leave enough to buy himself a tombstone; but his diocesans, not content with raising a lasting monument to him in their hearts, honoured him also with a magnificent funeral. Sobs and sighs were mingled with

[1] Greg. Nyssen., *in Eunom.*, lib. I, p. 313.

the chanting of psalms. Pagans and Jews wept, as well as Christians. All deplored the death of Basil, whom they regarded as their common father and the most renowned doctor in the world.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having raised up so many holy doctors to confound heresy and to defend our faith. Grant us the grace to imitate the detachment, mortification, and piety of St. Gregory and St. Basil, the faitb of St. Hilary, and the charity of St. Martin.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will have none but virtuous friends.*

LESSON XXV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES.)

The Church consoled: St. Hilarion. The Church attacked: Heresy of the Macedonians. The Church defended: General Council of Constantinople St. Ambrose; St Augustine.

THE marks of error are division and inconstancy. From the Arian heresy sprang a great many others; then, schisms and deplorable dissensions Now, while the doctors of the Church were attacking error by their discourses and their writings, angels of peace, victims of atonement, were praying in the desert and devoting themselves to all the austerities of penance, in order to obtain victory for their brethren and to repair the innumerable scandals and disorders caused by schism and heresy. Let us quit the field of battle, where the

[1] The works of St. Basil are:—

1 The *Hexaemeron*, or explanation of the work of the six days, in nine homilies. This work is a masterpiece: learning, eloquence, genius, and piety meet in its immortal pages. The holy archbishop having been unable to put the finishing touch to it, his brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, did so for him. It is related that both learned and ignorant ran in crowds to hear the great doctor explaining the wonders of the Creation. The most simple understood him, the most intelligent admired him (S. Greg. of Nyssa, *Hexaem.*, p. 3.)

2. Eight *Homilies on the Psalms.*

3. Five *Books against Eunomius.* They are a refutation of Arianism. They were written against the apology made for that heresy by Eunomius.

4. Twenty-four *Homilies on Morals and the Feasts of the Martyrs.*

5. *Ascetics*, intended to supply rules for a sacred militia, that is to say.

sword is so vigorously wielded by our illustrious fathers—St. Cyril, patriarch of Jerusalem; Lactantius; St. Ephrem, deacon of Edessa; St. Eusebius of Vercelli; St. Pacian, Bishop of Barcelona;[2] and others besides whom time does not permit us to name. Let us direct our steps towards those Eastern climes where we have already admired such great wonders. Behold in the depth of the desert this lonely hut: it is Hilarion's!

Hilarion, the hero of penance, was born in the little city of Tabatha, in Palestine. His parents were idolators. Sent at a very early age to Alexandria, in order to acquire human learning, he gave splendid proofs of a superior mind, and especially of an angelic purity of manners. As his reward, he had the happiness of coming to know and embrace the Christian Religion. Changed suddenly into a new man, he had no longer a relish for any but the holy assemblies of the Faithful. The fame of St. Antony, so renowed over all Egypt, reached his ears: he immediately formed the design of paying him a visit in the desert. Touched by the example that

rules for the war that we have to maintain against the enemies of our salvation.

6. The *Book of the Holy Ghost*, wherein the Divinity of the Holy Ghost is clearly established.

7. *Letters*, models of the epistolary style, to the number of three hundred and thirty-six.

All the encomiums given above to the style, the eloquence, and the learning of St. Gregory Nazianzen, are to be applied also to his illustrious friend.

A splendid edition of the complete works of St. Basil (Greek and Latin texts) has been published by Gaume Brothers, Paris, 6 vols., octavo, two columns.

[1] St. Cyril has left us some excellent instructions, addressed to catechumens, as well before as after Baptism. The first bear the simple name of *Catecheses*. they are eighteen in number. We find therein the most interesting details regarding the excellence of baptism, the symbol, the sign of the cross, virginity, fasting, prayer, the discipline of the secret or the obligation of not revealing our holy mysteries to the profane. The second are called *Mystagogical Catecheses*, or ones that lead into the secrets of mysteries: they are five in number, and were preached at Jerusalem during Easter week, after the baptism of the catechumens. The others had been preached during the Lent of the same year, 247. In the mystagogical catecheses, the Saint's chief object is to explain the nature and effects of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, which were then received on the same day. The fifth is the most interesting, since it contains the liturgy as observed in the time of St. Cyril, and teaches how the Christians used to communicate. A French translation of the Catecheses has been given by Grandcolas, doctor in theology of the Faculty of Paris Paris, 1815, quarto.

[2] It is in one of his *Letters to Symphronius against Heresies*, that he uses the remarkable words, "My name is Christian; my surname, Catholic: the one distinguishes me, the other designates me."—Christianus mihi nomen est: Catholicus vero cognomen: illud me nuncupat, istud ostendit.

he witnessed, he changed his dress and set himself to imitate the saint's kind of life, fervour in prayer, humility in the reception of the brethren, perseverance in austerity, and other virtues.

However, fearing to be distracted by the crowds of people who came in search of St. Antony, either to be healed of their infirmities or to be delivered from the devil, he decided on returning to his own country. As death had taken away his father and mother, he gave a portion of his goods to his brethren and the rest to the poor. He then retired to a desert, having the sea on one side and an immense marsh on the other. In vain did any person represent to him that this place was infested with robbers: his answer was that he feared nothing but eternal death. When giving this wonderful example of detachment and courage, Hilarion was only fifteen years of age. His constitution was so delicate that the least excess of heat or cold was severely felt by him; yet he had no other clothing than a piece of sackcloth, a leathern tunic given him by St. Antony, and a very short cloak.

Arrived in his desert, he forbade himself the use of bread. For six years he had nothing daily as his food but fifteen figs, which he ate at sunset. When he experienced any temptation of the flesh, he would enter into a holy anger against himself, strike his breast heavily, and say to his body, which he regarded as a wild horse, "I will put you from kicking; I will feed you on straw, instead of corn; I will load you well, and so weary you out that you will soon think rather of having a little bit to eat than of pleasure."

He knew by heart a great portion of the Holy Scripture, which he used to repeat while working. His work consisted of digging or tilling the ground; or else, after the example of the solitaries of Egypt, he made baskets in order to procure himself a subsistence. This brave athlete had to endure the most violent attacks of the devil: with the help of prayer and mortification, he came off victorious. At the age of twenty one, he condemned himself to eat nothing daily but a handful of herbs steeped in cold water. The three following years, dry bread, salt, and water became his only food. At eighty, he reduced his allowance to four ounces, never eating yet till sunset. St. Jerome, starting from this point, makes some wise reflections on the laxity of Christians who allege old age as an excuse for dispensing themselves from the obligation of doing penance.

So many virtues were rewarded by the gift of miracles. To avoid his own renown, which increased from day to day, Hilarion quitted his desert, and went to visit the places that had been inhabited by St. Antony. Filled with new fervour, he retired with two of his disciples into a frightful solitude, where the fame of his

miracles caused him to be again discovered. At last he embarked for the island of Cyprus. Here, retired into a place wholly unknown, he copied, as far as it is possible for a mortal to do so, the life of the blessed in Heaven.

Having attained the age of eighty years, the venerable old man wrote with his own hand his last will, in which he bequeathed to his disciple Hesychius all his riches, namely, a book of the Gospels, a haircloth, and a cloak. A family of pious Christians, hearing that the Saint was about to depart this life, ran as it were to receive his last breath. He made them promise that as soon as he should be dead they would bury his body just as it was clothed, with his hair-shirt and cape. He was so weak that he hardly showed a sign of life; yet his presence of mind remained throughout. He could be heard repeating these words, which were his last: "Go forth, my soul; what dost thou fear? Go forth, my soul; of what art thou afraid? For nearly three score and ten years thou hast been serving Jesus Christ; canst thou fear death?" As he ended these words, he yielded up the ghost: this occurred in the year of Our Lord 371.

With the glorious name of Hilarion are joined other names, equally famous in the history of the fourth century. St. Pacomius, Abbot of Tabenna; St. Abraham, St. Theodorus, and St. Julian, the flowers of the deserts of Mesopotamia; St. Pambo, Abbot of Nitria; the two Macariuses; and many others, of whom the world was not worthy. During the great battle of error against truth, and of scandal against virtue, the desert placed in the divine scales the prayers and expiations of its angelic inhabitants, and the Church won the victory!

Scarcely had she a moment to breathe under the Emperor Jovian, when the cry of war was again heard. A new heresiarch came and attacked one of the foundations of the sacred edifice: Macedonius denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. A watchful sentinel, Athanasius, who was still living, raised the alarm, and triumphantly refuted the new heresy. Nevertheless, the evil spread more and more. Athanasius died. Theodosius the Great, being solicited by the Bishops, convoked a Council to Constantinople, and showed himself no less magnificent than Constantine had been towards the Fathers of Nice. The Bishops met to the number of a hundred and fifty. An effort was first made to bring back the Macedonians; but they remained obstinate in their sentiments. They even withdrew from the Council, which then treated them as declared heretics.

Confirming the Symbol of Nice, the Fathers of Constantinople added a few words to set forth more clearly the mystery of the In-

carnation and the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Speaking of the Incarnation, the Symbol of Nice only said, He came down from heaven, He became incarnate, He was made man, He suffered, He rose again from the dead the third day, He ascended into Heaven, He will come again to judge the living and the dead. The Symbol of Constantinople says, He came down from Heaven, He became incarnate by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, He was made man, He suffered, He was buried, He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures, He ascended into heaven, He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, He will come again with majesty to judge the living and the dead, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Regarding the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Symbol of Nice only expressed itself thus: We believe in the Holy Ghost. That of Constantinople adds on account of the Macedonians: We believe in the Holy Ghost, who is also Lord and *Life-Giver;* who proceeds from the Father;[1] who, with the Father and the Son, receives the same adoration and the same glory; who spoke by the Prophets.

The Emperor Theodosius received this decision as coming from the mouth of God Himself; and, a worthy "Outside Bishop," he made a law enjoining the execution of all that had been appointed by the august assembly. Held in 381, this Council was approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, and was the second œcumenical one.[2]

Like those monstrous African serpents that unite cunning with strength in order to get possession of their prey, the heresies of Arius and Macedonius, vanquished at Nice and Constantinople, endeavoured to show themselves again under various other names and forms, sometimes employing artifice and sometimes violence to destroy the sheep of the Lord. But the Divine Shepherd, who keeps watch over His flock day and night, raised up new defenders, in whose presence crime and heresy, armed with the imperial power, had to take flight. In the front rank appears St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan.

This great doctor was born in Gaul about the year 340. Among his ancestors were consuls and prefects of the empire. His father, governor of Gaul, England, Spain, and part of Africa, left him when dying to a mother who cultivated with much care his mind and heart. After completing his studies at Rome, Ambrose went to Milan with his brother Satyrus, and both there practised at the bar. Their only sister, named Marcellina, received the veil from the hands of Pope Liberius.

[1] On *Filioque*, see our *Traité sur le Saint-Esprit*, t. II.
[2] Fleury, t. IV, l. XVII

Ambrose soon found his reputation spreading. The most eminent men sought his friendship: among them was Probus, the prefect of Italy. He named Ambrose governor of Liguria and Æmilia, that is to say, of all the country comprised at present under the archiepiscopal sees of Milan, Turin, Genoa, Ravenna, and Bologna, and the minor sees depending thereon. Probus said to him when leaving, "Go, and act more like a bishop than a judge." Ambrose, faithful to this advice, which also harmonised with his character grew quickly to be admired for his probity, vigilance, and gentleness. For the rest, the recommendation given him by Probus seemed like a prediction of what should soon occur.

Auxentius, a furious Arian, who had usurped the see of Milan, died. During the twenty years nearly that his intrusion lasted, he had persecuted the Catholics with no less violence than malice. When there was question of electing a new Bishop, the city divided into two parties. Some asked an Arian; others, a Catholic: a sedition ensued. Ambrose tried to appease it, and, going to the church, addressed the assembled multitude in a speech full of wisdom and moderation. While he was yet speaking, a child cried out, *Ambrose Bishop!* The tumult ceased on the spot. Catholics and Arians united, and with one voice proclaimed the governor Bishop of Milan. Ambrose strove in vain to escape this honour by betaking himself to flight. Having lost his way, he found himself next morning at the gates of Milan.

Being only a catechumen, he was baptised, and afterwards ordained priest. He was consecrated Bishop on the 4th of December, 372. Placed in the episcopal chair, he no longer looked on himself as a man of this world. To break the last ties that might attach him thereto, he distributed whatever gold and silver he possessed to the Church and the poor, reserving however an annuity for the support of his sister Marcellina. Ambrose devoted himself wholly to the care of his flock, and to the composition of those excellent works with which he enriched the Church.

The Goths, falling on the territories of the empire, had penetrated as far as the Alps. Ambrose spent considerable sums in redeeming captives: he even employed for this good work the golden vessels of the Church, which were broken up and sold. The Arians reproached him on this subject; but he answered them that it was better to save souls than to keep gold These heretics, having no longer a church in Milan, excited the Empress Justina to declare herself against the holy Archbishop, and they succeeded. The princess, a zealous Arian, sent to ask him, at the approach of Easter of the year 385, for the Portian Basilica, that the Arians there

celebrate the divine service for herself and the numerous officers of her court.

Ambrose, who knew that the audacity of sectaries increases in proportion as there is less resistance offered them, made a firm stand, and answered that he would never give the temple of God to His enemies. The Empress, the Emperor himself, threatened in vain: the holy Archbishop would not yield an inch. He had, nevertheless, to suffer much on this occasion: but he avenged himself as the Saints know how. He applied himself to check the evil designs of the tyrant Maximus against Italy, and thus gave a striking proof of his attachment to his persecutors.

Shortly after the pacification of the Church of Milan, the Emperor Theodosius committed a fault that occasioned the shedding of many a tear. The city of Thessalonica had rebelled against its governor, who was slain in the midst of the disturbance. Theodosius, to avenge his death, caused seven thousand of the inhabitants of this unfortunate city to be massacred. The news of this barbarity rent Ambrose's heart. The Emperor having come to the church, the holy Bishop met him at the porch. "Stop, prince," said he, "you do not perceive the enormity of your sin. The splendour of the purple ought not to make you forget that you are a mortal, that you are formed of the same clay as your subjects. There is only one Lord, one Master of the world. With what eyes can you behold His temple? with what feet can you tread His sanctuary? Will you dare, when praying, to raise towards Him those hands still stained with blood unjustly shed? Retire therefore, and do not add sacrilege to so many murders."

The prince having said in palliation of his offence that David had sinned, Ambrose answered, "You have imitated him in his sin; imitate him in his repentance." Theodosius submitted, and accepted the canonical penance that was imposed on him. He returned to his palace sighing: he remained there for eight months wholly occupied with exercises proper to public penitents. At the approach of the festival of Christmas, he felt his sorrow increasing more and more. "What!" he said, "the temple of the Lord is open to the least of my subjects, and entrance into it is forbidden to me!"

He went, not to the church, but to an adjoining hall, where Ambrose told him to place himself among the public penitents: Theodosius accepted the condition. The holy Bishop, in order to correct him effectually, required that he should issue a decree suspending for thirty days the execution of sentences of death Theodosius instantly ordered the decree to be written out, signed it, and promised to observe it. Then St. Ambrose, touched

by his docility and by the ardour of his faith, removed the excommunication, and granted him admission into the church.

Theodosius, prostrate on the ground and bathing it with his tears, struck his breast and repeated aloud these words: "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement; O Lord, restore my life, according to Thy word!" All the people, affected by such a rare example, accompanied him in his prayers and his tears. That supreme majesty which in a moment of impetuous anger had made the whole empire tremble, no longer inspired any sentiments but those of compassion and grief. An admirable example on the part both of the Saint and the Emperor! It teaches Bishops that pure faith and zeal are above all the powers of earth; and it warns Princes that their truest greatness consists in humbling themselves before the King of kings.

The holy Archbishop died on the night between Good Friday and Holy Saturday, April 4th, 395, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. Antiquity assigns him the first place among the four Great Doctors of the Latin Church. Evidently raised up by God for the defence of Catholic truth, this holy Doctor wrote a great many excellent works. There are few important truths of Religion that we do not find well established and clearly developed therein: accordingly they were ranked, as soon as made public, among the books which the Church consults on matters of Faith.[1]

[1] The chief works of St. Ambrose are:—

1. The *Hexaëmeron*, or treatise on the six days of creation. St. Ambrose followed St. Basil in part.

2. The *Book on Noe and the Ark*. Noe is represented as a model of virtue for all mankind.

3. The *Book of God and of Death*. The Saint shows that death is not an evil.

4. The *Book of Abel, Isaac, and Joseph*, wherein are painted the virtues of these holy patriarchs.

5. The *Book of the Blessings of the Patriarchs*, wherein the Saint treats of the obedience and gratitude which children owe to their fathers and mothers.

6. The *Book of Elias and of Fasting*, wherein he shows the efficacy of fasting.

7. The *Offices of Ministers*, wherein the Saint teaches Priests to become men of God.

8. The *Book of Virgins and Virginity*.

9. The three *Books of the Holy Ghost and of the Incarnation*, wherein are perfectly refuted the heresies of the Arians and the Macedonians.

10. Most interesting *Letters*, to the number of ninety-one.

11. *Books on the Death of Satyrus*, his brother.

12. *Hymns and Chants*. The *Te Deum* is attributed to him or to St. Augustine.

The Benedictines have published an admirable edition of St. Ambrose: Paris, 1686-1690, 2 vols., folio.

When descending into the tomb, Ambrose closed, so to speak, that brilliant generation, that galaxy of illustrious men, which had enlightened, defended, and edified the Church during the fourth century But, happier than many others, the great Doctor outlived himself in his incomparable disciple St. Augustine. Though Ambrose should have had no other title to the remembrance of posterity than that of winning Augustine to the Church, it alone would be enough to secure for him the gratitude of all ages.

This new light of Christianity, this scourge of heresy, this genius the most comprehensive and most versatile, this mind the most subtile and most penetrating, this heart the most loving and most tender that perhaps ever was known on earth, this man whose very name is a eulogy, Augustine, was born at Tagaste in Africa in the year 354. Patricius, his father, was a pagan. His mother was St. Monica, the glory of her sex, and an everlasting model for Christian mothers and wives.[1]

In his youth, Augustine, like so many others, learned in the study of pagan authors, Virgil particularly, to follow all the desires of a corrupt heart. He abandoned himself to libertinism and the errors of the Manichees. His pious mother, however, had instructed him in the mysteries of the Christian Religion, and had taught him to pray. As far as possible, she did not leave him : still less did she let herself be discouraged. She followed him to Italy, where he was professing rhetoric: he employed himself thus at Rome and Milan. St. Ambrose was then Bishop of the latter city. Augustine, moved by the discourses of the Bishop and the tears of his mother, thought seriously of forsaking his irregularities and renouncing Manicheism. Having been instructed, he was baptised at Milan on Easter Eve, 387, in the thirty-third year of his age. Augustine had still a struggle to quit the professor's chair; but God, who wished to have him wholly His, broke this last bond.

An African nobleman, named Pontilianus, came to pay a visit to Augustine and his friend Alypius. He found on their table the Epistles of St. Paul, and took occasion thence to relate for them the history of St. Antony, a father of the desert, and some other servants of God. The account given by Pontilianus touched Augustine very much. He beheld as in a mirror his own shame and confusion, and he was horrified at the sight. Pontilianus had no sooner left, than he addressed these words to Alypius: "How can we endure that ignorant people should rise up and carry off Heaven, while we with all our learning grovel in flesh and blood? Do we blush to

[1] See her life in Godescard, t. V. 475. It ought to be the manual of married women.

more, because they are gone on before us? Would it not be the greatest shame of all to be unwilling even to follow them?"

He then arose and went out into the garden. Alypius followed him. Augustine, having withdrawn a short distance, threw himself down under a fig-tree, and gave free course to his tears. "How long, O Lord," he exclaimed, "how long wilt Thou be angry against me? Remember no more my past iniquities." Feeling an iron will, a perverse will, that still held him back, he heaved many a deep sigh, and began to reproach himself thus: "How long shall I say, To-morrow, to-morrow? Why not to-day? Why should not I, this very moment, put an end to my disgrace?

While speaking in this manner and weeping, he heard the voice as it were of a child singing and saying, *Take and read, take and read!* Looking round, he could not see anyone; but he remembered that St. Antony had been converted by hearing a passage read from the Gospel. He returned therefore at once to the place where Alypius remained, and where he had left the Epistles of St. Paul. He took the book, opened it, and read straight on the first words that fell under his eyes. They were to this effect: Do not spend your life in banquetings and drunkenness, nor in dabauchery and impurity, nor in a spirit of avarice and contention; but clothe yourself with Our Lord Jesus Christ, and beware of satisfying the desires of the flesh.[1]

He wanted no more. Rising up, he went in search of Alypius with a calm heart and a serene countenance. Such is the promptitude with which grace must be corresponded to. Both then went to relate to St. Monica all that had just occurred. We may imagine the holy joy that filled her soul. Augustine set out shortly afterwards for Africa; but, having reached the port of Ostia, he lost his virtuous mother. Nothing can be more edifying than her last words to her son Augustine. "My son," she said, "there is nothing more in this life to interest me: what should I do here any longer? All my wishes are accomplished. I desired that my days should be lengthened only to see you a Catholic and a child of Heaven. God has done still more than I hoped for, since I see you wholly devoted to His service, and full of contempt for the advantages to which you might aspire in the world. What then should delay me here any longer?"

For seventeen years this great Saint had prayed to obtain the conversion of her son and her husband. One day, in her grief, she confided the cause thereof to a holy Bishop, who encouraged her with these memorable words: "No, the son of so many tears cannot

[1] *Rom.*, xiii. 13.

be lost!" In effect, she obtained the conversion both of her husband and her son. What a noble example for so many Christian wives and mothers in our day! Let each of them be a Monica, and she may expect her husband or her son to become a Patricius or an Augustine. Our great doctor was deeply affected by the death of his holy mother. He wept for her like a good son, and never ceased to pray for her.[1]

On his return to Africa, Augustine withdrew to the country, where he gave himself up to fasting and prayer, and formed a community with some of his friends. Thence the order of the *Hermits of St. Augustine* dates its origin. Augustine also founded other monasteries, and became, by the wise rules which he gave them, the second patriarch of religious orders. Shortly afterwards, having gone to the city of Hippo, the Faithful laid hold of him, and led him off to Valerius, their Bishop, whom they entreated with loud cries to impose hands on him. Augustine burst into tears at the thought of the dangers that accompany the functions of the priesthood; but he was obliged to yield, and was ordained about the close of the year 390.

Valerius permitted him, by a privilege previously unknown in Africa, to preach the word of God: this right had been reserved exclusively to the Bishops. For the rest, never had the Church more urgent need of a defender.

Schism and heresy were laying Africa waste. On the one hand, the Bishop Donatus and a few others, refusing to admit as lawful the ordination of Cecilian, Bishop of Carthage, though it was approved and confirmed by the Pope, gave rise to a deplorable schism, which lasted for many years, and brought about innumerable disturbances, outrages, and murders. On the other, the Manichees, a detestable sect, corrupted the doctrine and morals of the Faithful. The Arians, Semi-Arians, and above all the Pelagians, though divided among themselves, entered into a formidable league against the Church. Lastly, the Pagans never ceased to excite general hatred against the Catholics, by accusing Christianity of having drawn on the empire the repeated invasions of the barbarians, and the other calamities that afflicted it.

To meet so many enemies, to heal so many wounds, Providence raised up an extraordinary man. And that there might be no mistake regarding the certainty of his mission, Augustine was born in Africa about the same day that the monk Pelagius, the author of Pelagianism, was born in England: this heresiarch denied the necessity of grace to work out one's salvation.

[1] *Conf.*, l. IX. c. xii

Before entering the arena, the vigorous athlete of the faith had begun, as we have seen, to make sure of victory by placing in the desert a number of intercessors, who, like Moses, would pray on the holy mountain, while he himself fought in the plain. We cannot doubt that St. Augustine's religious obtained for their father those lights, that strength, that transcendent genius, which enabled him to triumph; above all, they obtained the conversion of hearts and the forgiveness of the guilty by their voluntary expiations: a touching return, which we behold in every page of the history of the Church!

Augustine was consecrated Bishop of Hippo in the year 395, in the beginning of the forty-second year of his age. Valerius died the year following. Strengthened by the holy unction, Augustine first attacked the Manichees. In a public controversy he demonstrated so clearly the absurdity of their doctrine, that one of their most distinguished men came and abjured heresy in the hands of his conqueror. He wrote several works that gave the finishing stroke to this detestable sect. Then came the Arians, whose ignorance and bad faith he boldly unmasked in various treatises worthy of his amazing genius. The Pelagians had their turn. It was against them especially that he fought longest. To confound them was, it would seem, the chief end of his mission: he acquitted himself so well of this charge that his works have always served as a rule in the Church on questions of grace. Last of all, turning on the Pagans, he published against them his immortal work, the *City of God.* Philosophy, erudition, piety, logic, Religion, all are combined in this great work. He undertook to answer the complaints of the Pagans, who attributed the irruptions of the barbarians and all the other misfortunes of the empire to the establishment of the Christian Religion and the destruction of idols.

Amid his continual cares to drive away the wolves, the watchful untiring pastor never forgot the sanctification either of his flock or of himself. It was for the instruction and edification of Catholics that he wrote a great many works on all matters of Religion: he also gave a history of his life, entitled his *Confessions.* In vain will you seek elsewhere for more unction, piety, humility, simplicity, confidence in God, truth in the description of human passions, than are to be met with in this work.

His kind of life was that of a Saint, a penitent Saint. His clothing and furniture were plain, but decent. The only silver articles in his house were spoons: his plates, &c., were of clay, wood, or marble. He practised hospitality with a large heart; yet his table was frugal. One found there some legumes, with a little meat for strangers and sick persons. The quantity of wine was

regulated for each guest. During the repast a book was read, or the conversation turned on some important topic, in order to banish idle words.

He had caused to be written up over his table two verses, the object of which was to prevent every kind of detraction. If any-one wounded the neighbour's reputation in his presence, he would warn him thereof on the spot; and, the better to mark the horror that he felt for this vice, he would rise up suddenly and retire to his room. When he was obliged to speak to women, it was always in presence of some of his Priests. Whatever he spared from the revenues of his Church was employed in the relief of the poor, to whom he had previously given his patrimony. He sometimes melted down part of the sacred vessels in order to redeem captives, and he took great care to maintain the pious custom of clothing annually the poor of each parish.

His zeal for the spiritual welfare of his flock knew no bounds. "I do not desire," he would say to his people, "to be saved without you. Why am I in the world? It is to live solely in Jesus Christ, but with you: this is my passion, my honour, my glory, my joy; this is all my wealth." His fervour increased more and more as he drew nearer the end of his days.

During his last illness, he caused the Seven Penitential Psalms to be written out on the wall of his room, so that he might be able to read them from his bed, and he never read them without shedding many tears. About ten days before his death, not wishing to be interrupted in his exercises of piety, he forbade any person to enter his room, unless when the physicians came to see him or when his food was being brought to him. This order was punctually obeyed. At length he calmly expired on the 28th of August, 430, aged seventy-six years, forty of which he had spent in the labours of the ministry. Another trait in the character of this great man puts the finishing touch to his glory: he made no will, because he had nothing to leave![1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given us such masters and models as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. Grant

[1] The works of St. Augustine which the Faithful would do well to use, are, (1) his *Confessions;* (2) his *Soliloquies;* (3) his *City of God;* (4) his Commentaries on *Genesis*, &c.

The most highly esteemed edition of the complete works of St. Augustine (Latin text) has been published by Gaume Brothers, Paris, in 22 large volumes. octavo, two columns.

Une tres-remarquable traduction des *Confessions* de saint Augustin par M Louis Moreau a été publiée par les mêmes éditeurs en un volume in-8°. Cette traduction a été couronnée par l'Académie française.

us a share in their attachment to the Faith and in their profound humility.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often pray for the preservation of the Faith.*

LESSON XXVI.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FIFTH CENTURY, *continued*).

The Church defended: St. Chrysostom; St. Jerome. The Church consoled: St. Arsenius; St. Gerasimus—Lauras of the East—Life of Solitaries. The Church attacked: Nestorians and Eutychians. The Church defended: Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. The Church afflicted: Invasions of Barbarians—Providential Designs; Capture of Rome. The Church protected: St. Leo; St. Genevieve.

HERETICS, always ready in appearance to submit when the Church should speak, made no more account formerly than nowadays of her most solemn decisions. Hence, the partisans of errors, condemned by preceding Councils and scattered to the winds by the Doctors of the Church, continued to propagate them. Faith, explained and vindicated, had taken deeper root in the minds of the Faithful; but the sectaries would not be converted: so difficult is it to return to the way of truth when pride and ambition have led people out of it! New heretics joined with the old ones, and the sacred edifice was again attacked on several sides at once. To defend it, God raised up some great Doctors, such as St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, St. Isidore of Pelusium, and St. Epiphanius, but above all St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, and St. Jerome.

St. John Chrysostom, the king of eloquence, the glory of the Eastern Church, was born at Antioch in the year 334. His father was general of the imperial troops in Syria. Anthusa, his mother, though she became a widow at twenty years of age, would not enter into a second marriage. She took on herself the care of inspiring her children with the first principles of Christianity. Never was there a woman more worthy to bear the name of mother.

The Pagans themselves could not help admiring her virtues, and a famous philosopher, speaking of her, was heard to exclaim, "What wonderful women there are among the Christians!" John studied eloquence under Libanius, a celebrated pagan rhetorician. This illustrious master, before dying, gave a strong proof of the

esteem in which he held the talents of our Saint. His friends having asked him which of his disciples he wished to be his successor, he replied, "I would name John, only that the Christians have stolen him from us."

While studying human sciences, John laboured earnestly to penetrate his soul with the maxims of the Gospel. He exercised himself in the practice of humility and mortification. He had naturally an inclination to anger; but he succeeded at length in repressing all its sallies, and in acquiring that perfect meekness which is so much recommended by Our Divine Master. To this virtue he joined an admirable modesty, a tender charity for the neighbour, and a conduct so full of wisdom that no one could know him without loving him. Having had a close view of the world, he was soon disgusted with it, like all other noble souls, and he withdrew to a desert, where he made rapid progress in the paths of perfection.

St. Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, had no sooner became acquainted with the rare merits of the young solitary than he resolved to attach him to his Church. He therefore brought him to his own house, and ordained him reader. Flavian, the successor of Meletius, next raised him to the priesthood, and made him his vicar and preacher: John was then forty-three years old. During twelve years he was *the hand, eye, and mouth of his Bishop*. Though the city of Antioch counted more than a hundred thousand Christians, the zeal of our Saint sufficed to declare to all the ordinances of the Lord. He preached several times a week, and often several times a day. The fruit of these discourses was so great that he succeeded at length in exterminating vice, in remedying the most inveterate abuses, and in changing the whole face of Antioch.

He had also a singular talent for controversy. He handled his subjects so ably that the Jews, Pagans, and Heretics who came to hear him, met with a most clear refutation of their errors. His fame soon spread to the extremities of the empire. God—for the glory of His name and the good of His Church—placed him on a new stage, where other labours and other crowns were in store for him.

The see of Constantinople becoming vacant in 397, the Emperor Arcadius resolved to raise our Saint to it; but it was necessary to have recourse to stratagems. He had him carried off from Antioch, and consecrated by Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Our Saint began his episcopate by regulating the affairs of his own house. Whatever was left of his revenues, he applied to the relief of the poor and especially the sick: he founded and main-

tained several hospitals, the care of which was intrusted to holy Priests.

One abuse above all excited his indignation: it was the immodesty of women in their dress. Some among them seemed to have forgotten that garments were originally intended to hide the ignominy of sin, and that it was thus a complete violation of order to turn to the service of a criminal vanity what ought to move us to repentance, confusion, and tears. It required nothing less than the eloquence of Chrysostom to put an end to this scandal. The holy Patriarch set to work. On this point, as on so many others, Constantinople changed its face.

His zeal was animated by that wondrous picture which he had always before his mind: he looked on his diocese as an immense hospital, full of the deaf and the blind, so much the more to be pitied as they delighted in their state. His solicitude burst through the limits of the fold confided to him, and extended to the most distant regions. He sent two Bishops to instruct, one the Goths, and the other the wandering Scythians or *nomads*. Nothing more remained for the Saint but to receive the usual reward of zeal and virtue, that is to say, persecutions. They were not wanting to him.

The Empress Eudoxia—Eutropius, a favourite of the Emperor—the Arians, to whom he refused a church—all these passionate and perverse people united and obtained from the Emperor a decree of banishment against the holy Patriarch. Soldiers tore him away from his Church. But, the very night of their departure, an earthquake shook the imperial palace, and the terrified Empress besought the Emperor to recall the Archbishop. Chrysostom returned, and was received with loud acclamations by all his people; but he was soon to depart again, never to return.

A second sentence, as unjust as the first, banished the Saint to the extremities of the empire. He had much to suffer in consequence. All his consolation was derived from the letters of esteem and fraternal affection that were written to him by Pope Innocent I. and the greatest Bishops of the West. Sometimes the holy Archbishop, who was bald, was exposed to the burning rays of the sun; at other times he was turned out in the heaviest rain, and obliged to walk till his clothes were all wet through and dripping. His health completely broke down at Comana Pontica. When he reached his last station, he took off his ordinary clothes and put on white ones, as if to prepare himself for the nuptials of the Heavenly Lamb. He received the Holy Communion, and made his prayer, which he concluded, as was his wont, with these words: *May God be glorified for everything!* Then, having said *Amen* and formed on

himself the sign of the cross, he peacefully surrendered his soul into the hands of God. This was on the 14th of September, 407.[1]

Let us now turn our eyes towards another quarter of the East. Near the grotto of Bethlehem there is a man whose mighty genius is inspired by the memories of the holy places; a man who, from the depth of his solitude, fills the earth with the fame of his name, upholds the Church, crushes heresy, carries the knowledge of Scripture to its uttermost limits, lays down safe rules for Priests and mothers, and, lastly, opens a refuge for the poverty-stricken descendants of the Paul Æmiliuses and the Scipios. This extraordinary man, this pillar of the Church, this light of the whole world, is St. Jerome.

Born at Stridon, on the confines of Dalmatia, about the year 331, he received an excellent education, which he afterwards perfected at Rome, where he made rapid progress in literature and eloquence. Amid the attractions of this great city, Jerome forgot little by little the holy maxims with which his parents had inspired him. Worldly ideas and a great disrelish for the exercises of Religion became the characteristics of his conduct. He did not fall into gross vices, but he had not that spirit of Christianity which makes the true disciple of Jesus Christ.

At length the moment of grace came; and, on his return from a journey to Gaul, he asked for Baptism. Consecrated thenceforth to prayer and the study of Scripture, he lived as a cenobite in the midst of the din of Rome, and as a saint in the midst of corruption and profligacy. From Rome he passed into the East and buried himself in the scorching deserts of Syria. The austerities that he practised there would seem incredible, if they were not related by himself. He next went to Jerusalem; then, to Antioch. Paulinus, Bishop of the latter city, raised him to the priesthood, but Jerome would not consent to his ordination save on condition that he should not be attached to any church.

A desire to hear the illustrious St. Gregory Nazianzen brought him to Constantinople in 381. The following year, he went to Rome. Pope Damasus detained him there He employed him in the most important affairs of the Church, and appointed him to answer the letters of consultation which he received from Bishops. To free himself from various persecutions, which his merit and

[1] The most beautiful of the works of St. Chrysostom are, (1) his *Treatise on the Priesthood;* (2) his *Homilies to the People of Antioch;* and (3) his *Commentaries on St. Matthew and on the Epistles of St. Paul.*

Under the care of Messrs. Gaume Brothers, Paris, the complete works of St. Chrysostom, both in Geek and Latin, have been published. 26 volumes, octavo. There is no better edition of this Father.

virtue had drawn on him, the Saint set out again for Bethlehem, where St. Paula, an illustrious Roman lady, built him a monastery He himself raised an hospice for the reception of the numerous pilgrims who came to visit the holy places.

The holy doctor has left us a most interesting picture of the heavenly life led by the monks of Bethlehem, and of the piety reigning in the surrounding country. After speaking of the riots of large cities, he exclaims in a transport of joy, "The village of Jesus Christ is truly a country place. The ears are not disturbed there by any noise save the singing of psalms. Wherever you turn, you hear the labourer who, with his hand on his plough, sings *alleluia*, or the reaper who lightens his toil by singing sacred canticles."[1]

Alas, how times are changed! What do you hear nowadays in town or country? Ask yourself before God whether you cannot do anything to revive the pious and touching custom of which you have just read.

Meanwhile, Jerome was busy day and night in studying and writing. As he loved the Church with a truly filial love, he had an eye on all the heresies of his time, and was indefatigable in refuting them. The Luciferians, who accused the Church of too much indulgence towards penitents; the Helvidians, who denied the perpetual virginity of Mary; Jovinian, who decried the state of virgins, and preached rebellion against the laws of the Church; Vigilantius, who condemned as an idolator any person that honoured the relics of the Saints: all these fell one after another under the grasp of the lion of the desert. The Saint so confounded them with his stern logic and fiery language, that they no longer knew what to say.

Pelagianism, which was spread throughout the East, found in Jerome a dreadful adversary. He refuted it in a celebrated dialogue, and put the Faithful on their guard against this pernicious heresy.

To the continual uneasiness that he felt on account of the danger of the Faithful in the East, and the losses that the Church had sustained from schism and heresy, was now joined the news of the capture of Rome by the Vandals. The city had been pillaged and sacked: a frightful famine had completed its desolation! Whole families were to be seen fleeing away with hardly any clothes, without food, without money: the descendants of the masters of the world reduced to beggary! Men and women, quitting their native land in order to escape death, buried themselves in marshes and deserts. A great number directed their steps to Bethlehem. St.

[1] *Ep.*, xvii. n 126.

Jerome could not restrain his tears at the sight of so many unfortunate people: he spared no efforts to feed them, to console them, and to procure them homes.

One of the most signal services that the holy doctor rendered to the Church was to revise the text of the Bible, and to correct the faults that had glided into the various versions of the holy books. He undertook this great and painful labour at the request of Pope Damasus, and he acquitted himself of it so well as to merit the applause of the Catholic world. The austerity of the holy anchoret did not yield to his zeal for the Church or to his application to study. He had retired into solitude, he said, to bewail his sins in a cell, while waiting for the Day of Judgment. He preferred the coarsest clothes and the plainest food. He lived on brown bread and a few herbs: even of these he only took a little. Worn out by labour and penance, the noble conqueror of vice and heresy went to rest in the bosom of God, for whom he had fought so valiantly. His death occurred on the 30th of September, 420.[1]

The glorious victories gained over schism and heresy by St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and the other doctors of the fifth century, will no longer surprise us if, entering the desert, we consider how many Moseses were praying on the mountain. While the world was in a state of continual agitation, a perfect calm reigned in solitude. Noble examples were given to Pagans in order to convert them, to bad Christians in order to detach them from the world, and to the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in order to encourage them; at the same time, a great expiation, thrown into the scales of the divine justice, secured victory for the Church and pardon for the guilty. Among those intercessors, then in the desert, we shall make particular mention of St. Arsenius and St. Gerasimus.

Arsenius, a Roman by birth, of illustrious family and rare merit, thoroughly versed in divine and human knowledge, was leading a retired life at Rome, when the Emperor Theodosius the Great begged Pope Damasus to look out for some one to whom he might entrust the education of his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius. The holy Pontiff cast his eyes on Arsenius, and sent him to Constantinople. Theodosius received him with great marks of distinction, raised him to the dignity of senator, and ordered that he should be respected as the father of his children, whose tutor he

[1] The chief works of St. Jerome are, (1) his *Commentaries on Scripture*, (2) his *Letters*; (3) his *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*; (4) his *Books against Helvidius, Jovinian, and Vigilantius.*

D. Martianay, a Benedictine of the Congregation of St. Maur, has given the world an edition of St. Jerome: Paris, 1683, 1704, 5 volumes, folio. This edition leaves room for improvement.

was now appointed. He wished him to have a splendid suite, and he attached to his service a hundred domestics, all richly attired.

One day the Emperor, having come into the chamber of his children, to see them at their lessons, found them sitting and Arsenius standing. Not only was he displeased at this, but he deprived his children for some time of the marks of their dignity, and ordered that during their lessons they should stand and Arsenius sit. This warning made no change on Arcadius. Having committed a fault, he was punished by Arsenius. The young prince felt the humiliation keenly, and only became more stubborn. Arsenius seized this occasion to carry out a project which he had long since formed, namely, to abandon the world. He retired to the desert of Sceté, in Egypt: this happened about the year 394. Arsenius was then forty years of age, and he had spent eleven at the court of Constantinople.

Received after some rough trials into the monastery of St. John, Arsenius distinguished himself among all the anchorets by his humility and fervour. In the beginning he permitted himself, without the least thought however, certain things to which he had been accustomed in the world, and which, though harmless in themselves, seemed to bespeak a little levity and immortification; for instance, he used sometimes to cross his legs. The old religious, who had a singular respect for him, did not like to admonish him of this in a public assembly of all the brethren. But Abbot Pastor made use of the following stratagem. He agreed with one of the monks that the latter should put himself in the same posture, and that he should then reprove him for it as for a thing contrary to religious modesty: which was done. The monk listened in silence to the reproof, without uttering a word of excuse. Arsenius saw plainly that a hint was given indirectly to somebody else: he watched over and corrected himself.

Of all the monks of Sceté there was not one more poorly clad than he. He wished hereby to punish himself for that external splendour with which he had lived at court. Having fallen sick, the Priest of the desert had him carried to his own abode, which was near the church. He was laid on a little bed made of the skins of beasts, with a pillow under his head. One of the solitaries, having come to visit him, was scandalised at such a degree of luxury, and asked if this was the Abbot Arsenius. The Priest took him aside and said to him, "What employment had you in the village before you became a monk?" "I was a shepherd," replied the other, "and I had no small trouble to live." "Well!" resumed the Priest, "Arsenius, when in the world, was the father of Emperors, he had in his train a hundred slaves clad in silk and adorned with

golden bracelets and belts; he lay at his ease on the richest beds. As for you, who were a shepherd, you found yourself worse off in the world than here!" The good monk, touched by these words, fell on the ground, exclaiming, "Forgive me, father, I have sinned; I acknowledge that Arsenius is in the true way of humiliation." He then took his departure, very much edified.

On another occasion, one of the Emperor's officers brought Arsenius the will of a senator, a relative of his, who, before dying, had made him his heir. The Saint asked how long it was since his friend died. "A few months," answered the officer. "It is a much longer time," said Arsenius, "since I myself died: how then can I be his heir?" This great man, who had seen the world in its brightest colours, was so disgusted with it that he used every year to commemorate solemnly the day on which God had done him the favour of calling him from it. His manner of solemnising this day was to go to communion, to give alms to three poor persons, to eat some cooked legumes, and to leave his cell open for all the solitaries that wished to pay him a visit.[1]

His humility was equal to his merit. With an immense fund of information, great command of language, and a handsome appearance—he was tall, his hair white, and his beard falling to his girdle—he had all the reserve and modesty of the youngest solitaries. On a certain day, as he was consulting one of the ancient fathers, a virtuous but simple old man, one of the brothers said to him, "Father Arsenius, how is it that you, who are acquainted with all the sciences of the Greeks and Romans, have recourse to such a guide?" He answered, "I have no doubt studied deeply the sciences of Athens and Rome, but I do not yet know the alphabet of the science of the Saints, in which this good father is a consummate master."

To urge himself on to the practice of all the virtues that make man an angel on earth, he used often to put to himself this question, afterwards so celebrated: "Arsenius, why didst thou leave the world, why didst thou come hither?"

For fifty-five years this great expiator of the crimes of the world, this great intercessor for the Church with God, accomplished in tears and penance his sublime mission, and filled the desert with the light of his example. At length God called him to his reward. The fear of the divine judgment made him shed some tears, but did not disturb the calm of his beautiful soul. Abbot Pastor, the witness of his death, exclaimed, "Happy Arsenius, to have wept for himself as long as he was on earth!

[1] In ejus vita

They who do not weep here shall weep for ever in the next life." Arsenius died in the year 449, aged fourscore and fifteen.

In proportion as the disorders, revolutions, crimes of the world became greater, God, who always regulates the means of defence according to the attacks of the enemy, peopled the deserts with an ever-increasing multitude of holy solitaries. At this period, we must relate the foundation of those *Lauras* so celebrated in the East, and so dear to the hearts of Christians. What were those *Lauras?* Picture to yourself, in the midst of a vast solitude, a large circular plot of ground, the centre of which is occupied by a church, wherein resides the God of Heaven, while the circumference is marked off by a number of little cells, apart from one another, and inhabited by solitaries, or rather by angels, and you will have an idea of the ancient *Lauras.*

The first was founded a few miles from Jerusalem, on the banks of the Jordan, in places whose echoes still told of the Prophets, John the Baptist, and the Divine Master. One of the most renowned was that of St. Gerasimus.

Formed in 440, about a mile distant from the Jordan, it consisted of seventy cells. The religious remained alone, every one in his cell, five days of the week, having no other food than some bread and water and a few dates. Yet they lived in society under obedience to a superior. On Saturday and Sunday, they went to church, chanted in common the praises of God, partook of the holy mysteries, ate together something cooked, and drank a little wine. After Vespers on Sunday, they returned to their cells, carrying the bread, water, and dates, which they would require for their support during the five days that they were to be alone.

Their occupations were prayer and manual labour. They could never light a fire, nor even a lamp to read with. It was a law among them that, when they went out of their cells, they should leave the door open, in order to show thereby that they had no private property, and that their brethren might dispose of their little furniture: thus did they keep alive that spirit of charity so remarkable among the Early Christians. St. Gerasimus died in the year 475.[1]

This wonderfully perfect life we meet with at every step in the deserts of the East and West. Let us listen to an eye-witness, St. Chrysostom, describing for us the life of some anchorets dwelling on the mountains near Antioch.

"They rise," he says, "at the first crow of the cock, or midnight. After reciting Matins and Lauds, everyone occupies himself

[1] *Hélyot*, t. I, p. 164.

in his cell, reading the Scriptures, or copying books. Again, all go together to the church to recite Terce, Sext, None, and Vespers; afterwards, they return in silence to their cells. They never speak with one another. Their conversation is with God, the Prophets, and the Apostles, on whose divine writings they meditate.

"Their food consists of a little bread and salt. Some add a little oil; the infirm, a few herbs and legumes The repast over, they take some moments of repose according to the Eastern custom, and return to labour. They make baskets and hair-cloths, till the ground, cut down wood, prepare food, and wash the feet of guests, whom they entertain with great charity, heedless whether rich or poor. A mat stretched on the ground serves them for a bed. Their clothes are made of goats' and camels' hair, or of skins so roughly dressed that the poorest beggars would hardly wear them.

"Yet among them may be found those who were born in the bosom of opulence and were delicately brought up. They use no shoes, hold no private property, and place in common what is provided for the indispenable wants of nature. True, they receive the legacies of their relatives, but only to distribute them among the poor. All that they can spare from the produce of their labour is also turned to the same use. They have all but one heart and one soul: never are the terms *mine* and *thine*, which so often break the bonds of charity, heard among them. In their cells there reigns an unchanging peace, a pure joy, vainly to be sought after amid the fascinations of the world.

"These anchorets conclude their evening prayer with severe reflections on the Last Judgment, in order to excite themselves to Christian watchfulness, and to prepare themselves better and better for that rigorous account which we must all render to the Lord."[1]

St. Chrysostom always followed this practice, of which he had learned the advantage by experience, and he recommends it strongly in his works, as well as that of evening prayer. Does he not do so that his example may not be lost on you?

The world had need of those mighty legions of intercessors, not only to defend it from the unceasing attacks of heretics, but also to save it from the invasions of the barbarians. The former, more cruel than the Huns and Vandals, had again crept into the fold of the Saviour.

In 431 the Council of Ephesus, the third œcumenical one, had condemned Nestorius. This heresiarch taught that there were two persons in Our Lord, and consequently denied the divine maternity

[1] Lib. II, *de Compunct.*, p. 182. *Homil.* lxxii, *in Matt.*, lib. III, *contra Vitup. vitæ monast.*, c. xiv

of the Blessed Virgin. The decrees of the Council, presided over by St. Cyril of Alexandria, in the name of Pope Celestine, were received with the unanimous acclamations of the Faithful. The devil, the untiring propagator of all heresies, drove on Eutyches to the opposite extreme, and made him propound that there was only one nature in Jesus Christ. Thanks to the zeal of St. Leo, a new General Council met at Chalcedon. Numbering six hundred Bishops, it was presided over by the legates of the Holy See.

Proceedings began by the reading of a letter, in which the Sovereign Pontiff explained concisely the Catholic doctrine on the mystery of the Incarnation, attacked by Nestorius and Eutyches. The Fathers no sooner heard it than they all cried out with one voice that it had been dictated by the Holy Ghost—that Peter had spoken by the mouth of Leo—and that it should serve as a rule for the whole Church. In the synodal letter which the Fathers of Chalcedon addressed to St. Leo at the close of their sittings, they begged him to confirm their decisions. "You presided over us," they said, "as the head over the members." The holy Pope confirmed all the decrees relating to matters of Faith, and they were received by the whole Church with the utmost respect. The Council of Chalcedon was the fourth œcumenical one.

While St. Leo opposed with one hand the ravages of the heretics, he stayed with the other the barbarians who were rushing on the empire. To be brief, we see in the fifth century numberless hordes of half savages issuing from the north of Europe and Asia, falling on the Roman empire, possessing themselves of its fairest provinces, slaughtering its inhabitants, and planting their tents on the ruins of palaces and cities.

About the year 408, the Germans establish themselves on the banks of the Rhine, from Bâle to Mayence. The Burgundians occupy Switzerland and all the country as far as the sources of the Seine and Loire. The Vandals ravage Gaul: this flourishing country is soon turned into a heap of ashes and ruins. Having laid it completely waste, the barbarians force their way into Spain, and here secure an establishment at the expense of the Romans.

Providence permitted these things for two reasons: first, to punish that old pagan society which had made itself drunk with the blood of martyrs, which had trampled the world under foot for so many ages, and which, notwithstanding the urgent solicitations of the Christians, had shut its eyes against the light of the Gospel, secondly, to hand over the torch of Faith to new peoples that would know how to value it. Such has been the line of conduct invariably pursued by Our Lord. When one multitude refuses to be converted, He leaves it, and calls another that will rejoice the

Church. The rejected are speedily punished, and their misfortunes, becoming a monument of His justice, contribute to the establishment of His empire.

Among those terrible warriors who, during the fifth century, carried alarm and desolation into the Roman empire, there were two whose very name still makes us shudder: Alaric and Attila.

Alaric, King of the Goths, bore down on Italy like a torrent that has overflowed its banks: he destroyed whatever he met on his way. In 410 he had reached the gates of Rome. This proud city, this haughty mistress of the world, after suffering during a long siege the horrors of a most cruel famine, was delivered at night into his hands. The conqueror abandoned it to the good pleasure of his barbarous soldiers. The work of destruction was frightful. None were spared but those who had taken refuge in the churches of SS. Peter and Paul. Fire went hand in hand with pillage. The spread of merciless flames, the crash of falling houses, the outrages, the shrieks, the fear and anguish depicted on every countenance, made the scene appalling; and, as if Heaven had armed itself to punish this guilty Babylon, a furious storm came to aid the ravages of the Goths. Thunderbolts struck down many temples, and reduced to dust those idols once adored which Christian Emperors had preserved for the ornamentation of the city. It was thus that Rome lost in one day that splendour which had raised it far above every other city in the world: the majesty of the Roman name was gone for ever!

Religion, which, on this occasion, saved Rome from total ruin, saved it a second time under Attila: we may say in all truth that the Popes were the preservers of the Eternal City. Attila, King of the Huns, crossing the Danube and Rhine at the head of a countless host, put all Gaul to fire and sword, and turned his face towards Italy. Sent by God to punish the effeminacy and corruption of the old Romans, this prince had a consciousness of his awful mission he entitled himself in his letters *the terror of the world and the scourge of God.*[1]

He was accustomed to say that stars should fall before him, that the earth should tremble under him, that he was a hammer for the whole world.[2] During twenty years, he employed himself in pulling down cities and thrones. He carried off most of the riches of palaces, only to distribute them among his soldiers. After these expeditions, he used to take his rest in a little hut, where his food was served up to him on wooden plates. He was small, but very stout; he had a strong, sonorous voice. The kings whom he led

[1] Metus orbis et flagellum Dei.

[2] Stellas præ se cadere, terram tremere, se malleum esse universi orbis.

along in his train used to say that they could not endure the fierceness of his look.

In the spring of the year 452, Aquileia, Milan, all the cities of Upper Italy, fall under the repeated strokes of the barbarian. The Roman legions flee in terror, and the wild torrent hurries on towards Rome with ever-increasing rapidity. St. Leo finds in his faith the courage to raise a barrier against it. He sets out: Rome accompanies him with its prayers, and, on the 11th of June, 452, he reaches the camp of Attila, established near Lake Garda, on the banks of the Mincio, not far from the little town now called Peschiera.

Here is presented to the mind one of the grandest spectacles that can be conceived. Barbarism and civilisation, Paganism and Christianity, the man of blood and the man of God, physical force and moral force—in a word, Attila and Leo stand face to face. Which of the two shall bear away the palm of victory? To answer this question, we must remember that the God who watches over the Church is He who said to the waves, "Thus far shalt thou come, and here, against this grain of sand, shalt thou break the pride of thy waves." In presence of Leo, the barbarian is dumb and motionless. At length he finds words sufficient to tell his astonished officers that he has seen standing beside the Pontiff another Pontiff, of majestic appearance, who threatened him with death if he did not obey Leo. And Attila, terrified, commands the retreat to be sounded, and hurries away out of Italy!

Three years afterwards, in 455, the same Pontiff saved Rome a second time. Genseric, king of the Vandals, having made himself master of this city, Leo begged him to forbid his troops to shed any blood in it or to set fire to it: the petition was granted.[1]

At the same period, a mere shepherdess, St. Genevieve, saved Paris from the fury of Attila. By her prayers to Heaven, she prevented this barbarous conqueror from entering the city. It is thus that in all ages God gives defenders to His Church, and to the infant peoples of His Church; and these defenders of faith, life, and civilisation, the world nowadays despises!

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the sublime examples of virtue which Thou hast given us in the persons of St. Arsenius, St. Jerome, and St. Chrysostom. Grant us the grace to imitate their humility and charity.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often ask myself why I am a Christian.*

[1] See details in the *Trois Rome*, t. III. p. 544 *et suiv*

LESSON XXVII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES.)

Judgment of God on the Roman Empire. The Church propagated: Conversion of the Irish; Conversion of the French—St. Clotilda. Religion saves Science and creates a New Society. St. Benedict: Influence of his Order; its Services to Europe. The Church afflicted in the East: Violence of the Eutychians. The Church defended: Fifth General Council.

NOTWITHSTANDING the efforts of holy doctors and the prayers of solitaries, the heretics and the old pagans continued to shut their eyes against the light. The sectaries endeavoured even to swell their ranks. All these people having rendered themselves unworthy of the truth, the justice of God took away the sacred torch which His divine mercy had presented to them and bore it to other peoples. For the Church is never to suffer loss: new children must always console her for the apostasy of those who desert her.

Suddenly there is a stir in the north of Europe and Asia. Crowds of barbarous peoples are sent to gather the precious manna of truth, which old Paganism loathes. They come on two very different missions: to punish the Roman Empire for its ingratitude, its crimes, its obstinacy against the Lamb that rules the world; then, to console the Church by becoming her docile children. They begin to execute the first. The huge giant that has so long oppressed the earth, and that for three centuries has drunk the blood of martyrs, falls under their blows, and the scattered fragments of his corpse proclaim to all ages that thus shall the empire be treated which refuses to have Christ reign over it.

On the ruins of the old world, the barbarians fix their abode. That amiable daughter of Heaven, the Religion of Charity, comes to them. Her sweet maternal voice strikes upon the ears of the terrible conquerors. The lions grow tame. The Church first makes them men, until such times as she can make them Christians. The miracle is wrought insensibly, and a new world is created. At the same period there is accomplished another prodigy, instances of which we have more than once pointed out.

The sun that enlightens nature is not more regular in passing from one point of the heavens to another than the sun of truth in enlightening a new people when a guilty people has rejected its light. Thus, at the very moment when the heresies of which we spoke in the last lesson carried off many of the Church's children, the sacred torch was placed in the hands of a young Saint who

should let it shine before the eyes of a whole nation. St. Patrick, by becoming the Apostle of Ireland, gained to Jesus Christ one of the most fervent portions of the divine fold, and perhaps the most faithful.

The Saint was born in a village of England;[1] but he was a Roman by descent, and it is believed that his mother was niece to St. Martin, Bishop of Tours. Patrick was brought up in the Christian Religion. At fifteen years of age he committed a fault, which does not, however, seem to have been very serious. He conceived so deep a regret for it that he lamented it all the rest of his days. God soon put in his way a means of rendering Him much more glory than that of which he had deprived Him. He had not yet passed his sixteenth year when a troop of barbarians carried him off from his own country, with many of his father's slaves and vassals. He was taken to Ireland, where he was reduced to the condition of herding cattle on mountains and in forests. His body suffered much from hunger, cold, rain, snow, and ice; but God had pity on his soul. He discovered to him the full extent of his duties, and inspired him with a will to perform them faithfully.

Corresponding with grace, Patrick looked on his state as a Christian, and no longer sought anything but the means to sanctify it: resignation and prayer made him undergo his trials cheerfully. After six years of slavery, he found an opportunity of returning to his native land. But God made known to him by several visions that He would employ him for the conversion of Ireland. Among other things, it seemed to Patrick that he saw all the children of this country stretching out their hands to him from the wombs of their mothers, and imploring his help with cries that would rend the hardest heart.

St. Prosper says that our Saint received his mission for Ireland from Pope St. Celestine, who consecrated him Bishop thereof. Filled with the apostolic spirit, Patrick, after his return to his own country, generously forsook his family: he sold, as he says himself, his noble birthright in order to serve a foreign nation. He passed accordingly into Ireland to labour for the extinction of idolatry. He travelled through the whole island, making his way into the most remote districts, without fear of the dangers to which he should be exposed. His words, strengthened by his angelic patience under sufferings, produced amazing effects. Before his blessed

[1] It is almost needless say that there is still much difference of opinion as to the place of St. Patrick's birth. The most general opinion is that he was born in France. (*Tr.*)

death, which occurred in the year 464,[1] he had the consolation of seeing nearly all Ireland adore the true God.

Hail, holy Church of Ireland, virgin of the North, decked with a crown of lilies and roses, symbolic of the fulness of thy faith and the constancy of thy courage amid bloody persecutions! Trust in the God of the oppressed, in the God of martyrs: He who broke the sceptre of the Neros and the Diocletians will one day break the yoke with which spoilers and tyrants have for so many centuries bowed down thy innocent head!

From the hands of Patrick, the torch of the Gospel passed into those of a young princess, miraculously saved amid the general massacre of her family. This new Apostle, who, by converting the French, should procure for them much more happiness and glory than could ever have been derived from the conquests of their valiant captains, was St. Clotilda.

Clotilda was the daughter of Chilperic, who was brother of Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians. The last-named imbrued his hands in the blood of his brother, his sister-in-law, and the princes their children, in order to secure for himself the possession of their dominions. Nevertheless, he spared the two daughters of Chilperic, who were exceedingly beautiful, and from whom, on account of their extreme youth, there was no danger to apprehend. The elder was placed in a convent, where she became a nun. Clotilda remained at court with her uncle. She had the happiness of being brought up in the Catholic Religion, though she was obliged to live among Arians. She accustomed herself betimes to despise the world, and her excellent sentiments were strengthened by the practice of works of piety. Her innocence received no stain from the seductive charms that surrounded her on all sides.

Clovis, king of the Franks, and destroyer of the Roman power in Gaul, sent to ask her in marriage. His petition was granted, but on condition that the princess should be at liberty to profess her religion. The marriage was celebrated at Soissons in 493 with great solemnity. Clodilda made for herself in her husband's palace a little oratory, where she spent much of her time in prayer. She also practised a great many private mortifications; but prudence presided over all her exercises, so that she did not fail in anything becoming her state. The evenness of her disposition, her meekness, and her affability, gained her the affection of her husband. When she saw herself completely mistress of his heart, she had no other idea than to execute the design which she had formed of gaining himself to Jesus Christ.

[1] The Four Masters place St. Patrick's death in 493. (*Tr.*)

She used often to speak to him of the vanity of idols, and of the excellence of the Christian Religion. Clovis always listened to her with pleasure; but the moment of his conversion had not yet arrived. Courage, holy princess! continue your prayers and your good works: the God who holds in His hands the hearts of kings will soon turn to truth that of your husband!

In effect, a few years later on, Clovis, being at war with the Germans, gives them battle at Tolbiac, near Cologne. Disorder sets in among his troops. He himself is about to fall into the hands of his enemies. He invokes his gods; they are deaf. He cannot restrain the fugitives. In this perplexity, he remembers the God of Clotilda, invokes Him, and promises to adore Him if he shall win the victory. The aspect of affairs changes in a moment. The Germans are cut to pieces. A courier is despatched to acquaint Clotilda with what has just occurred. The pious princess, delighted beyond measure, sets out at once, and meets the king at Rheims.

St. Remigius, Bishop of this city, completed the instruction of the proud conqueror. Clovis no longer hesitated about his change. He assembled his soldiers and exhorted them to follow his example, by renouncing vain idols in order to adore the God to whom they were indebted for their victory. He was quickly interrupted by the shouts of the French. They cried out, "We renounce mortal gods. We are ready to adore the true God, the God whom Remigius preaches." *Omnis populus pariter acclamavit: Mortales deos abjicimus, pie rex; et Deum quem Remigius prædicat immortalem sequi parati sumus.* (Greg. Turon., *Hist.*, lib. III, c. xxxi, *apud Baron.* an. 499, n. 20.)[1] Baptism was fixed for Christmas Eve. Remigius, who wished to strike the eyes of the French by the august ceremonies of Religion, left nothing undone to add splendour to the occasion.

By his orders, the church and the baptistery were hung with the richest drapery, and thousands of exquisitely scented tapers were lighted, so that the holy place seemed full of a heavenly perfume. Nothing more magnificent than the march of the new catechumens! The streets and public places were richly ornamented, and the procession advanced with the Holy Gospels and Cross, from the palace of Clovis to the church. The air resounded with sweet hymns and litanies. St. Remigius held the king by the hand. The queen followed with two princesses, the sisters of Clovis, and more than three thousand men belonging to his army, whom his example had won to Jesus Christ.

[1] See in Baronius, year 514, the remarkable predictions which St. Remigius made to Clovis on the destiny of France.

When the king reached the baptistery, he asked for Baptism. The holy Bishop, showing at the moment an authority which belongs only to the minister of the Supreme Master, and using language of which profane history affords us no example, said to him, "Become meek, and bow thy head, Sicamber; adore what thou hast burned, and burn what thou hast adored."[1] In effect, becoming meek as a lamb, Clovis bowed under the hand of the Pontiff; then, having confessed the Faith of the Trinity, he received the sacred water and the unction of holy chrism: this was in 496. The three thousand Frenchmen who accompanied him, not to count the women and children, were baptised at the same time by the Bishops and other ministers who had come to Rheims for the ceremony. Of the two sisters of Clovis, one received Baptism, and the other, who was a Christian, but who had had the misfortune of falling into heresy, was reconciled to the Church.[2]

The news of the conversion of Clovis spread joy throughout the whole Christian world. He was then the only Catholic sovereign: the others were either pagans or affected with heresy. From the time that he embraced the true faith, this prince never ceased to practise it: a noble example, which his successors imitated for so many centuries, and which merited for them the glorious title of *Most Christian Kings!*

On her side, Clotilda returned continual thanks to God for the conversion of her husband. After his death, she took up her abode at Tours, near the tomb of St. Martin. There she spent the rest of her days in prayer, fasting, watching, and other exercises of piety. She seemed wholly to forget that she had been a queen, and that her children were seated on the throne. Having foretold her death thirty days before it happened, she received the Sacraments, and calmly surrendered her beautiful soul into the hands of her Creator on the 3rd of June, 545. From the date of the Baptism of Clovis began those long ages of glory and prosperity which made France the first among the nations by its morality, its enlightenment, and its influence. Fortunate would it have been if it had never despised the principle of its happiness!

All those barbarous peoples, the French, the Bungundians, the Goths, the Vandals, the Huns, the Alani, the Lombards, and so many others that, for more than a century, had been rushing down from the regions of the North, should one after another enter the pale of the Church. In the meantime, they were accomplishing without knowing it the terrible mission that they had received to

[1] Mitis depona colla, Sicamber; adora quod incendisti, incende quod adorasti.

[2] St. Grég. de Tours, *Hist. franc.*; *Hist. abr. de l'Eglise.*

destroy the old world. To save what was to be saved, God raised up a man deserving of the gratitude of all succeeding ages: this man was St. Benedict. He was the patriarch of the religious life in the West, or at least he gave a more perfect form to this excellent state.

This father of civilised Europe was born about the year 480 at Nursi, the episcopal city of the Duchy of Spoleto in Italy. As soon as he was of an age to apply himself to the study of the sciences, his parents sent him to the public schools of Rome. The angelic child was afraid that the bad example of so many young people would make an impression on his heart, and he resolved to withdraw from them. He set out from Rome, and retired to the desert of Subiaco, about twenty miles off. A low, damp cave served him as an abode. The devil followed him thither, and one day tempted him so violently that the servant of God, in order to overcome the temptation, rolled himself naked on thorns: he did not rise till his body was all covered with blood. The wounds that he had inflicted on himself extinguished the impure flames of concupiscence, whose painful sting he experienced no more.[1]

Meanwhile, the fame of his sanctity was daily increasing. A great many disciples came to the Saint, and, after some time, he built twelve monasteries, in each of which he placed twelve religious with a superior. Among these new children of penance were Maurus and Placidus, both sons of senators, and many other persons of distinction. Benedict soon quitted the desert of Subiaco to retire to Mount Cassino in the kingdom of Naples.

On Mount Cassino stood an ancient temple and a grove consecrated to Apollo, who still found adorers there. These remains of idolatry kindled the zeal of the servant of God. He preached the Gospel, and by the united force of his words and his miracles made a great many conversions. Lord of the soil, he broke the idol in pieces and cut down the grove. Having then demolished the temple, he built on its ruins two oratories or chapels under the invocation of St. John the Baptist and St. Martin. Such was the origin of the celebrated monastery of Mount Cassino, whose foundations were laid by St. Benedict in 527, the forty-eighth year o his age.

It was at Mount Cassino that St. Benedict wrote his rule, and founded the illustrious order of the Benedictines. God, who had chosen him as another Moses to lead an elect people into the true Land of Promise, authorised his mission by the gift of miracles, and also by that of prophecy. One day, in the presence of a great

[1] On the desert of Sublac or *Subiaco*, see *Trois Rome*, t. III.

many persons, he raised to life a novice who had been killed by the falling of a wall.

Totila, king of the Goths, having entered Italy, was very much struck at all the wonderful things that were related to him of St. Benedict. Wishing to try whether there was any real foundation for what he had heard, he sent him word that he would pay him a visit; but, instead of going in person to see him, he commissioned one of his officers, named Riggo, to do so. He clothed this officer with his royal robes, and gave him a numerous suite, including three of the principal officers of his court. The Saint, who was seated, no sooner saw the officer drawing near, than he cried out to him, "Put off, my son, those robes which you wear; they are not yours." Riggo, seized with fear, and ashamed at having attempted to sport with this great man, cast himself at his feet with all those who accompanied him.

As soon as he returned, he related to the king all that had happened, and the astonished Totila went himself to visit the servant of God. When he saw him, he fell prostrate on the ground, and remained there until Benedict raised him up. His astonishment reached its height when the Saint spoke to him thus: "You are doing a great deal of evil, and I foresee that you will do more. You will take Rome, cross the sea, and reign nine years; but you shall die in the tenth year, and appear before the tribunal of the Just Judge to render an account of all your works."

Every part of this prediction was verified in the course of time. St. Benedict himself died the year after that in which he received the visit from Totila. The hour of his death having been revealed to him, he acquainted his disciples with it, telling them to dig a grave for him: the grave dug, he took a fever. On the sixth day, he asked to be carried to the church in order to receive the Blessed Eucharist; after which he gave some instructions to his disciples. Then, leaning on one of them, he began to pray standing, with his hands raised towards Heaven, and thus calmly yielded up the ghost. It was on a Saturday—the 21st of March, 543. The glorious patriarch was sixty-three years old: he had spent fourteen at Mount Cassino.

If St. Benedict was great by his virtues, he was also great by his works. Great by his virtues: we have just seen him so in his humble, penitent, miraculous life. Great by his works: the most admirable, that which shows no ordinary man, that which shows a Saint replenished with wisdom from on high, is his rule; it has always been the delight of those who know it. Pope St. Gregory the Great speaks of it as eminent in wisdom, discretion, and gravity, and admirable in clearness. Several councils have called

it *holy*.[1] The renowned Cosmo de' Medici and many other able legislators used often to read it: they looked on it as a rich mine of maxims calculated to enlighten them very much on the art of governing well.

Here are a few of its points. The holy founder begins by commanding that all sorts of persons, without distinction, shall be received into his Order: children, youths, and adults, the poor and the rich, the plebeian and the noble, the slave and the free-born, the ignorant and the learned, the layman and the clergyman.

To admire duly the profound wisdom of this first article, we must call to mind the circumstances in which Benedict laid the foundations of his Order. A deluge of barbarians was overflowing Europe: the old world was disappearing in ruins before the conquerors. The Order of St. Benedict was like a new Noe's Ark open to all who desired a place of refuge. With perfect truth it may be said that this new ark bore, like the old, the materials of a new world. Therein were hidden the traditions of the sciences and the arts. Thence came forth the untiring labourers who later on cleared a large portion of Europe, and rescued it from barbarism.

The religious of St. Benedict rose at two o'clock in the morning the Abbot himself gave the warning for the office. After Matins, they employed whatever time remained to them until day in reading and meditation. From six o'clock in the morning until ten there was labour; then came dinner. There was no fasting between Easter and Pentecost; but from Pentecost till the 13th of September, every Wednesday and Friday, and from the 13th of September till Easter, every day, was a fast day.

Abstinence from meat, at least that of four-footed beasts, was perpetual. Poor in their diet, the religious of St. Benedict were also poor in their dress: in temperate climates it consisted of a cowl, a tunic, and a scapular. The cowl was a kind of hood that might be drawn over the head to defend it from the heat or the cold. The tunic was the under garment. The scapular was the outside garment worn during work; after work, it was laid aside to give place to the cowl, which was worn the rest of the day.

All the garments were woollen, of the commonest quality, such as were to be had at the cheapest markets. To take away every occasion of propriety, the Abbot gave to each religious the little things that he required, that is to say, besides his clothes, a handkerchief, a knife, a needle, a style for writing, and some tablets. Their bed was made of a mat or mattress, a serge sheet, a coverlet, and a pillow.

[1] Council of Douzi in 874, and Council of Soissons.

We see by old pictures that the habit of the early Benedictines was white and the scapular black. In order to be always ready to rise for the office, they slept without undressing. They seldom spoke. They received strangers with much cordiality and respect. They first took them to the oratory to make a short prayer; they then brought them into the guest-chamber, where refreshment was read for them; they afterwards treated them with all the charity possible.

The Abbot ministered water to them, and ate with them: no one spoke to them at any time but the religious appointed to do so. Those who came for the purpose of entering the monastery were not received until after great trials: it was only at the end of a year of perseverance that they were admitted. The novice wrote his engagement with his own hand, and laid it on the altar. If he had property, he gave it to the poor or to the monastery. He received the religious habit, and his own clothes were put by, in order to be given back to him again if unfortunately he should leave.

The life of the Benedictines was divided between prayer and manual and mental labour. Armed in turn with a hatchet, a spade, a trowel, or a hammer, the Benedictine, a wood-cutter, a farmer, a mason, or a carpenter, laid low immense forests; cultivated virgin lands, which soon became wondrously fertile under his enlightened care; and built in lonely valleys, or on sites admirable for their healthfulness or their beauty, those houses whose strength, dimensions, and fine proportions still amaze us. It is to him that Germany, France, England, and many other parts of Europe, are indebted for the material civilisation which they have enjoyed for so many ages.

While the rustic Benedictine bedewed with his sweat a soil covered with ruins or forests, his brother, the learned Benedictine, shut up in the *scriptorium*,[1] cultivated the fields of knowledge, and bequeathed to future generations the riches of the past.

In this Order, the *scriptoria* or *writing-chambers* were a most important part of each monastery. They were large halls, built of cut stone and well arched, so as to secure them from fire. Here, on rows of desks, of greater or less length, were fastened with iron chains the manuscripts of ancient works. A still stronger chain fastened them all together: it was that of excommunication. Yes, those Popes, those Bishops, those Catholic Priests, who are accused of being the enemies of knowledge, had forbidden, under pain of excommunication, the removal of these precious manuscripts from one desk to another.

[1] There was a *scriptorium* in every monastery.

In effect, such or such a manuscript was perhaps the only one. To let it be tossed about or carried from place to place would be to expose it to the danger of being lost or altered: this evil would have been irreparable. Now, it was here, before this desk, that the Benedictine spent his life. What do I say? Sometimes the life of one religious was not enough to transcribe, to decipher, to arrange a single work. The dying Benedictine left his place and his pen to one of his brothers. The latter continued the labour that had been begun. Thus one life, one mass of information, added to another, enriched the world with treasures for which it does not always show itself very grateful.

Not only were the Benedictines the preservers of valuable books, but they were the apostles of a great part of Europe. To them England, Friesland, Germany, are indebted for the light of Faith: we shall soon speak of this. In fact, this Order, so plainly raised up by Heaven to save whatever was worth saving from the old world and to prepare the way for a new world, spread everywhere with such rapidity that it may be truly said that, considered either intellectually or materially, Europe is the daughter of the Benedictines. In a little while there was not a province where the rule of St. Benedict was not known. The monasteries of this Order were so numerous in 1336, that Pope Benedict XII. divided them into thirty-seven provinces, marking off whole kingdoms for a single province, as Denmark, Bohemia, Scotland, Sweden, &c.: this gives us an idea of its vast extent.

But here is something more striking. Pope John XXII., who was elected in 1316, and who died in 1334, found, after a careful inquiry which he had caused to be made, that from the rise of this Order it had produced twenty-four Popes; nearly two hundred Cardinals; seven thousand Archbishops; fifteen thousand Bishops; fifteen thousand distinguished Abbots, whose confirmation belonged to the Holy See; and more than forty thousand persons canonised or beatified, of whom five thousand five hundred were monks of Mount Cassino and were there interred.[1]

One of the fairest conquests of the Order of St. Benedict was England. Before speaking of the conversion of this kingdom, let us cast a look on the Church of the East, to behold its trials and its consolations. St. Benedict, the father of a multitude of missionaries, had just sunk into the grave when, in the year 553, the party of Eutyches sprang up in Egypt, where they committed frightful outrages. No one durst resist them, on account of their

[1] See Bulteau, *Hist. de l'ordre de Saint-Benoit;* Arnold Wien, *Lignum Vitæ;* Joan. Mabillon, *præf., Act. SS. Sacr.*, l. I, IV, and V; the same, *Benedict.*, t. I, *Veter. Analec.*, t. III.

numbers and the credit that they enjoyed. They did their utmost to weaken the authority of the Council of Chalcedon, which had condemned them by defining that there are two natures in Our Lord Jesus Christ. At length, the Fifth General Council met at Constantinople: it numbered a hundred and fifty-one Bishops. It condemned the three works that the heretics regarded as their shield, namely, the writings of Theodoret against St. Cyril; the letter of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa; and the writings of Theodorus, Bishop of Mopsuesta. It also confirmed the four previous General Councils.

We meet here a remarkable example of the power which the Church has to condemn writings, to pronounce on the meaning of books, and to require that the Faithful should submit to her judgment. This authority is actually necessary for the maintenance of the Faith, since one of the best means to preserve the deposit of the truths which she teaches is to make known to the Faithful the pure wells from which they may drink and the poisonous cisterns which they should shun. Appointed by her Divine Author to teach good doctrine, she received at the same time the power to put her children on their guard against that which is evil; consequently, authority to forbid them the reading of books in which anything injurious to their souls is contained.[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for calling our ancestors to the Faith. Grant us the grace to regulate our conduct in all things according to our belief.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often pray for the preservation of the Faith.*

LESSON XXVIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES.)

The Church propagated: Conversion of England by the Benedictines. The Church afflicted in the East by the Persians: Ravages in Palestine and Syria. The Church consoled: St. John the Almoner, the Eastern Vincent de Paul.

If, in the sixth century, the East, infected with heresy, caused the Spouse of the Man-God to shed bitter tears, behold how quickly the West consoles her by offering numerous children to her tender

[1] *Hist. abr. de l'Eglise*, p. 23.

heart! In the front rank appear the inhabitants of England. Nothing more remarkable than the manner in which the conversion of this important country was brought about![1] A young deacon, named Gregory, was one day passing through the market-place of Rome. He noticed there some slaves of great beauty, exposed for sale: he asked their country and their religion. The seller told him that they were from Great Britain and were still pagans. Is it possible, exclaimed Gregory with a sigh, that beings so comely should be under the power of the devil, and that such an exterior should not be accompanied with the grace of God?

A noble thought burst that moment on his mind. He went to Pope Benedict I., and sought and obtained permission to carry the Faith to this interesting people. He actually set out; but, after a little while, the Sovereign Pontiff, moved by the lamentations of the people of Rome, who were inconsolable at the loss of their deacon, sent messengers to overtake Gregory—already three days' journey gone—and to order him to retrace his steps. The merit of obedience was his only consolation in a disappointment so grievous; but the young missionary never forgot his dear Britain.

Becoming Pope St. Gregory the Great, he had scarcely mounted the chair of St. Peter when he thought of carrying into execution the design which had so long made his noble heart throb. The Benedictines appeared to him worthy of this mission. He called Augustine, the prior of their Monastery of St. Andrew in Rome, and sent him to Great Britain at the head of forty missionaries Let us follow these new conquerors in their holy expedition.

The apostolic troop after a courageous journey landed in Kent. The king, who was called Ethelbert, granted the missionaries a public audience. He received them under an oak, at the suggestion of the idolatrous priests, who told him that in such a place the enchantments of the foreign magicians would lose their influence. On the day appointed, Augustine was led to the king. Before him were carried a silver cross and a banner representing the Redeemer. His companions followed him in procession, and the air resounded with the pious hymns which they all sang in alternate choirs. The king invited them to sit down in order that he might hear them at leisure. We bring you, said Augustine to him, the happiest tidings: God, who has sent us, offers you after this life a kingdom infinitely more glorious than that of England.

[1] According to a very old tradition, Christianity had been preached in England by St. Peter himself; also, by St. Joseph of Arimathea and other contemporaries of the Apostles. It was almost extinguished by the Saxon conquest.

"You make very fine promises," answered the king; "but I will not forsake the gods of my fathers for a new and uncertain kind of worship. However, I will not prevent you from trying to gain to your religion such as you can persuade; and, as you come from afar to share with us what you believe to be the truth, I will give orders that you shall be supported at my expense." This favourable answer filled them with joy; and they advanced towards Canterbury, singing along the road the following prayer: "Lord, in Thy mercy, turn away, we beseech Thee, Thy wrath from this city and from Thy holy temple, for we are sinners. *Alleluia.*"[1]

Curiosity led the pagans to pay the strangers a visit. They admired the ceremonies of their worship, compared their lives with those of the idolatrous priests, and learned to love a religion which breathed so much piety, austerity, and disinterestedness. It was with secret pleasure that Ethelbert beheld a change coming over the minds of his subjects. Struck himself by the virtue of the missionaries and the miracles which they wrought, he was converted. On the Feast of Pentecost, in the year 595, he declared himself a Christian and received Baptism. On the following Christmas, ten thousand of his subjects imitated his example.

The royal neophyte soon became an apostle. During the last twenty years of his life, the pious king Ethelbert employed all his influence to second the efforts of the missionaries, not by violence, but by private exhortation and example. The conversion of a single soul appeared to him a most precious conquest, and he regarded himself as a king only to serve the *King of Kings.*[2]

In order to give permanence to his rising Church, St. Augustine passed into France, and received episcopal consecration from the hands of Virgilius, Bishop of Arles, and Vicar of the Holy See in Gaul. On his return to England, he gathered the most abundant fruits, because God assisted his preaching with numerous and splendid miracles. The harvest daily increasing, the zealous reaper sent some of his companions to Rome to beg a new supply of evangelical labourers. They brought back with them several fervent disciples of St. Gregory. With this new colony of missionaries, the holy Pope sent all things needful for the divine service: sacred vessels, altar-cloths, church ornaments, vestments for priests and clerks, relics of the Apostles and Martyrs, and a great many books.

Thereto he added a letter full of salutary advice for Augustine. "Beware, my dear brother," he said to him, "of falling into pride and vain glory on account of the miracles which God works by you in the midst of the nation which He has chosen. While God acts

[1] Bede, i, 25. [2] Lingard, *History of England*, vol. I.

by you outwardly, you ought to pass a severe judgment on yourself inwardly. Strive to understand well what you are, and how excellent is the grace granted to a people for whose conversion you have received the power of performing miracles. Keep always before your eyes the faults that you may have committed by word or deed, that the remembrance of your infidelities may check the risings of pride in your heart Consider that the gift of miracles has not been given you for yourself, but for those whose salvation you have to procure. You know what He who is Truth itself says in the Gospel: Many shall come to Me and say, We have wrought miracles in Thy name, and I will answer them, I know you not."

Can any better proof be found of the reality of the miracles of St. Augustine than the rapid conversion of England and this serious advice of St. Gregory?

The Apostle of Great Britain died on the 26th of May, 604, leading to the Pastor of Pastors a whole people converted by his cares. Nothing gives us a higher idea of St. Augustine or of Christianity than the wondrous change wrought in England. Before the arrival of the holy missionaries, the Angles were abandoned to all kinds of vice and plunged in the grossest ignorance. What proves their remarkable ignorance is that, on landing in Britain, they did not know the use of letters, and all the progress that they had made in the sciences up to the time of St. Augustine was limited to adding to the alphabet of the Irish. They were, moreover, so cruel that they used even to sell their own children as slaves: an inhumanity hardly met with among the negroes of the present day.

But the light of the Gospel had no sooner shone on their eyes than they became new men, true disciples of the Saviour. The nobles rivalled the people in fervour and piety. By a strange influence, reserved to Christianity alone, thirty kings and queens of the Anglo-Saxons were seen, during the space of two hundred years, to descend from the throne, in times of peace and prosperity, and shut themselves up in the cloister. Where is heroism, where is strength of soul, if not in the contempt of human greatness, in trampling under foot all those passions of which the haughtiest conquerors of antiquity were the wretched slaves?[1]

What the Benedictines were doing in their monasteries for the preservation of the ancient works, a great many other communities were also doing from the sixth century at various places over the globe. Such were the religious congregations of St. Cæsarius at

[1] See Speed, *History of Great Britain*, p. 243, and *Monasticon Anglicanum*, pref., p. 9.

Arles, of St. Ferreolus at Uzès, &c. It would take too long to relate their inestimable labours: if the man who profits by them ignores them, the God who inspired them will not forget to crown them. Besides, a new phase in the great conflict of evil with good calls for our attention.

While the Roman Empire, parcelled out by the barbarians of the North, was disappearing from view and was soon to cease being named, another Empire, alike guilty, was about to crumble to pieces, and to cover Upper Asia with its dreadful ruins: it was that of the Persians. The Apostles had presented the light of the Gospel to it, and it had turned away in scorn. The cruel Sapor even persecuted the Christians of his states for forty years with unheard-of violence. more than two hundred thousand martyrs sealed their faith with their blood!

The successors of Sapor inherited his hatred and his cruelty So much shedding of blood demanded vengeance. It was deferred for some time, for God punishes only with regret; but at last, when empires as well as individuals refuse to yield to His grace, He lets fall on them His terrible arm.

The Empire of the Persians or Parthians will afford us an admirable example of this truth, and repeat for us the useful lesson that all empires and kingdoms come into existence to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, to whom God the Father has given the nations as an inheritance. As long as they are docile under the hand of this Immortal King, prosperity and glory are their portion; and the sight of their happiness extends the Empire of the Son of God, by teaching other peoples to love Him. If they are unfaithful, if they dare to rebel against the Lamb that rules the world, and to say to Him like the Jews, *We will not have thee reign over us*, they are broken in pieces; and the sight of their misfortunes consolidates the Empire of Jesus Christ, by teaching other peoples to fear Him.

You behold, then, two great peoples, the Romans and the Persians, who, at the birth of Christianity, were disputing for the sceptre of the world, crushed by the wrath of the Almighty in punishment for their resistance to the Gospel, and thus obliged to contribute to the establishment of the never-ending kingdom of Jesus Christ. On their immense tombs, as on the brow of the wandering Jew, the Christian eye reads this inscription: *Thus shall the peoples be treated who dare to say, We will not have Christ reign over us. Nations and kings, learn a lesson!*

Now, to fill up the measure of its iniquities, the Empire of the Persians rushed on Palestine in the beginning of the seventh century, that is to say, in the year 614. A Roman army that it met

on its way was cut to pieces. The Jordan was crossed by the conquerors, and the banks of this river from one end to the other were covered with ruins. The inhabitants of the country having fled, the rage of the enemy was turned against the holy solitaries who dwelt along the Jordan.

Eight days before the capture of Jerusalem, the Laura of St. Sabas was attacked. Most of the monks had removed: there remained only forty-four of the most aged and virtuous. They were venerable old men, who, having embraced the monastic life in their youth, had grown gray in its exercises. Some of them had not gone outside the Laura for fifty or sixty years; others had not seen the city since their entrance into the monastery: hence, they did not wish to leave the Laura on this occasion. The barbarians, having pillaged the church, took these holy old men and tortured them for several days, expecting that they would discover some hidden treasures; but, finding their hopes groundless, they fell into a fury and tore them to pieces. All these patriarchs of the desert met death with a cheerful countenance and with thanksgiving. It was easy to see that they had long desired to be delivered from the burden of this life and to go to Jesus Christ.

The enemy's army next marched on Jerusalem, which it entered without resistance, putting all before it to fire and sword. A great many priests, monks, and religious perished. It was chiefly such that this idolatrous people, full of hatred against Christianity, desired. The rest of the inhabitants—men, women, and children—were laden with chains, to be dragged away beyond the Tigris. The Jews alone were spared, on account of the hatred that they bore to the Christians: they signalised it on this occasion by carrying their rage further than the Pagans themselves. They purchased from the Persians as many Christian captives as possible, in order to have the barbarous pleasure of putting them to death according to their liking.[1] Full ninety thousand are stated to have been massacred by the Jews in this manner. Bishop Zacharias was led off into captivity. The Holy Sepulchre and the churches of Jerusalem were plundered and burned. But the most sensible loss of all was that of the True Cross, which every Christian would have been glad to recover at the cost of his life.

A considerable portion of the sacred wood had long been divided into little pieces, distributed everywhere over the Christian world; but there still remained a notable portion of it at Jerusalem. The Persians carried this off as they found it, that is to say, in a case sealed with the Bishop's seal. The patrician Nicetas, however,

[1] Chr. pasc.

saved two precious relics : the Sponge and the Lance of the Passion. As for the Holy Cross, it was deposited at Tamis in Armenia. When the enemy left, such of the inhabitants of Jerusalem as had betaken themselves to flight from the rage of the Persians and Jews returned into the Holy City. The Priest Modestus, in the absence of the Bishop Zacharias, undertook the government of this desolate Church, and laboured earnestly to repair the holy places.

The Persians had wasted and pillaged, not only Palestine, but also Syria and part of the neighbouring provinces. The misery was extreme : immense numbers of people lately rich, of old men, of women and children, were on the verge of starvation. Most of these unfortunates took refuge in Egypt. That tender Providence which watches over the Church had in waiting for them a consoler and a father : this was St. John, surnamed the Almoner, Patriarch of Alexandria. What more useful to us or more glorious to Christianity than to make known the Eastern Vincent de Paul? Listen to the artless narrative of his historian :[1]—

"Having gone to Alexandria," he says, "to kiss the relics of the holy martyrs Cyr and John, I found myself at table in company with a few persons very much devoted to the service of Jesus Christ. We were conversing together of the Scripture and the soul, when a stranger came and asked us for an alms. He said that he had lately been delivered from the captivity of the Persians. It happened that none of us had any money about us. But one of the guests had a servant very ingenious in bestowing alms. Yet the poor man had only three crowns a year to support himself, his wife, and two little children. He followed the stranger without pretending anything ; and, taking off a little silver cross which he wore, gave it to him, adding with much simplicity that he was not worth another penny in the world.

"I was so touched with this act, which the grace of God had suggested to the servant, that I immediately mentioned it to him who was sitting beside me : his name was Menna. He was a holy priest, who had been steward of the Church of Alexandria under the celebrated and blessed John the Almoner. When he saw me admiring and praising him who had given the alms, he said to me, You would not be surprised at his doing that, if you knew the instructions which he received and the tradition which he follows in such conduct.—How so ? said I.—He answered me, He was a long time in the service of our most holy and blessed patriarch John. Like a true son of this great pastor, he has inherited the ingenious charity of his father, who used often to say to him, Humble Zachary,

[1] Leontius, Bishop of Naples in Cyprus.

be charitable, and God promises you by my mouth that He will never abandon you, neither during my life nor after my death. This lesson Zachary has always practised up to this day. God has shown him many favours. But he gives everything away at once to the poor, without putting by anything for himself. And thus he has reduced his family to great want.

"He has often been heard saying to God with innocent joy, We shall see, O Lord! who will have the victory in this contest, whether You by always giving me good things, or I by always distributing them among the poor. Now, it happened one day that being very much grieved at having nothing to give a poor man who had asked him for something, he said to a trader of his acquaintance, My family have no bread; give me, I beg you, a piece of silver, and I will serve you in return for a month or two wherever you please and at whatever you please. The trader agreed. But as soon as Zachary had the money, he gave it to the poor beggar, requesting him not to mention this to anyone.

"Menna, who was a holy man, seeing that I listened to his account as I should listen to the Gospel, said to me with an overflowing heart, This surprises you! What, then, would you have felt if you had seen our holy Patriarch?—What more could I have seen? I answered.—You may, he added, by the mercy of God, trust my words. It was our blessed Patriarch that ordained me priest and made me steward of this most holy Church, and I saw him do things that transcend all imagination. If you like to come home to-day with your servant and give us your blessing, I will relate for you his works, of which I was an eye-witness.

"He had no sooner ended his words than I arose, and, taking him by the hand, accompanied him to his house. He then began to relate for me in simple terms the life of the Saint, one of whose chief characteristics, he said, was never to utter the least oath. I asked him for some paper and ink to note down in order what he told me, and he continued his narrative thus:—

"St. John, having been raised to the throne of the Church of the great city of Alexandria, so dear to Jesus Christ, called to him the stewards and deacons, and said to them, It is not just, my brethren, that we should be more careful of men than of Jesus Christ. All those present, and their number was very large, were much struck by these words. They were waiting for an explanation of them, when the Saint continued, Go therefore through the city, and draw up an exact list of all my masters. As no one understood whom he meant, or who could be the masters of the Patriarch, he was begged to name them. Whereupon he answered in these evangelical words: My masters and helpers are those whom you

call the poor and needy, since it truly belongs to them to aid us and to give us the kingdom of Heaven.

"The order of the holy Patriarch was speedily executed. They brought to him more than seven thousand five hundred poor persons. He commanded that they should be daily given all that they required. Accompanied by this dearly beloved flock, he went to take possession of his metropolitan church. But the charity of this good shepherd was displayed in a most wonderful manner towards the poor inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, plundered and pursued by the Persians. All those who could escape fled to this most holy man, like ships making for a safe harbour. Clerics and laymen, public and private individuals, Bishops themselves, all sought a refuge at Alexandria. John received them all, treated them kindly, consoled them, not as poor captives, but as true brethren. He put the sick and wounded into hospitals, where all their wants were supplied gratuitously. They did not leave till they chose themselves, and he himself used to visit them two or three times a week.

"As for those who were well and who came to ask an alms, he gave one piece of silver to men, and two to women as the weaker. Some persons wearing golden bracelets and other such ornaments having called to ask an alms, the stewards of the holy Patriarch complained of it; but he, contrary to his custom, met them with a severe look, and, raising his voice, said to them, If you wish to be my stewards, or rather those of Jesus Christ, obey simply the precept which He has laid down, to give to whosoever asks us. He has no need, nor I either, of curious ministers. If what I give were my own, I should have some reason to spare it; but it is God's, and God wishes that we should observe His commands in the distribution of His goods. I will not share with you in your little faith; for, though the whole world should run to Alexandria to seek alms, it would not exhaust the infinite treasures of God.

"The solicitude of the charitable Patriarch did not let him forget the unfortunate Jerusalem. As soon as he heard of the sack of this city, he sent to it a pious man named Ctesippus with a great deal of money, clothes, grain, and other useful things. At the same time, he despatched two Bishops and the Abbot of Mount St. Antony with large sums to redeem those who had been carried off captive. Thus acted in other days, during the invasions of the hordes of the North, St. Leo, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and so many other Bishops, who were not only the lights of their age, but the benefactors of the human race.

"The deputies of the Patriarch informed him that the Abbot Modestus was in great want of things necessary for the restoration

of the holy places. He immediately sent him a thousand pieces of gold, a thousand sacks of wheat, a thousand sacks of legumes, a thousand pounds of iron, a thousand packages of dried fish, a thousand barrels of wine, and a thousand Egyptian workmen, with a letter in which he said, Forgive me if I send you nothing worthy of the temple of Jesus Christ; I would gladly go myself to labour at the temple of His holy resurrection. With this help the Abbot Modestus rebuilt the churches of Calvary, the Resurrection, the Cross, and the Ascension. He rebuilt the last-named from its foundation to its roof, and called it the Mother of Churches."

The next lesson will complete the work of acquainting us with this bright example of charity—an example which is always a powerful spur to virtue and one of the most admirable apologies for Christianity.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having raised up in St. Augustine an apostle for England, and in St. John the Almoner a father and a consoler for the Church of the East, despoiled by Thy enemies. I bless Thy Providence, which thus watches over all the wants of Thy children

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never say that I will not have Jesus Christ reign over me.*

LESSON XXIX.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SEVENTH CENTURY.)

The Church consoled: Continuation of the Life of St. John the Almoner; his Love for poverty; Edifying Story in which he used to delight in telling; his Last Will. Last Will of St. Perpetuus. Judgment of God on the Parthians. The True Cross is restored.

Let us remain a while in the East to study our Vincent de Paul, whom Religion, ever the same in its spirit as well as in its faith, will raise up again before our eyes in the West after the lapse of a thousand years. The holy Patriarch of Alexandria forgave injuries as readily as he gave alms. Here is a proof of what we say. His Church had let several places which it owned, and the rent of which was spent in the relief of the poor. One day the senator Nicetas wanted to dispose of these places for the benefit of the public funds. The Saint opposed him. A great contest ensued, and each withdrew resolute in his views

The Saint felt exceedingly grieved at what had just occurred. He therefore sent to Nicetas in the evening an archpriest, attended by a cleric, with the following memorable message: *The sun is going to set!* Nicetas had no sooner heard it than he returned to himself. Bursting into tears, he went off to find the Saint, who said to him, You are welcome, O true son of the Church, who obeyed so promptly the voice of your mother! They then knelt down before each other, embraced, and took seats.

I assure you, said the Patriarch, that, if I had not noticed you very angry, I would have gone myself to visit you, knowing that Our Lord Himself used to go to cities and houses to visit men. I declare to you, father, answered Nicetas, that I will never again in my life listen to those who would be glad to engage me in disputes.

The singular tenderness of the good Patriarch for the poor was put to a severe test. The Lord permitted it in order to show forth the resignation and confidence of His servant. Among the very valuable possessions of the Church of Alexandria were several ships, which used to sail every year to Sicily for corn. Now, these ships, to the number of thirteen, were overtaken by a fierce storm in the Adriatic Sea: every one of them was built to carry ten thousand bushels. All the cargoes, consisting not only of corn, but of stuffs, silver, and other precious articles, had to be thrown overboard. The ships alone barely escaped a total wreck. On reaching Alexandria, the sailors and helmsmen fled to the church for refuge. The Saint, hearing of this, wrote them a note with his own hand in these terms:—My brethren, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away from us. As it hath pleased Him, so is it done: blessed be His holy name! Go forth, my children, without being disturbed at this loss: He will not fail to take care of us.

Nearly half the city went to see the holy Patriarch, and to offer him their sympathy. But it was he who consoled everybody by humbling himself before God, and placing his confidence more than ever in Him. He was not deceived. The Lord soon restored to this new Job more good things than He had taken away. As usual, all was employed for the relief of the poor, with a charity yet greater than before.

Generous towards his brethren, the Saint was sparing towards himself. In the humble cell that served him as a palace, he slept on a little bed laid on the ground, having for its only ornament a wretched coverlet. One of the chief inhabitants of Alexandria happened on a certain day to see this woollen coverlet, all torn as it was. He immediately sent the Patriarch one that cost thirty-six pieces of silver, and begged him to make use of it for his sake. Yielding to his earnest entreaties, the Saint received it, and made

use of it for one night. But he could not close an eye, and those who lay near his cell could hear him repeating almost the whole night long, "Who would think that the humble John had over his bed a coverlet that cost thirty-six pieces of silver, while the brethren of Jesus Christ were perishing of cold? How many are there that have not under them half a rush mat and as much above; that cannot stretch out their feet, and thus sleep rolled up like a ball, shivering with cold! How many pass the night in the mountains, without food and without fire! How many poor persons at this very hour in the streets of Alexandria that do not know where to turn, and are lying on the pavement, drenched with rain! How many others that would be glad to dip their bread in the gravy which my servants throw away! How many others that would be glad to taste the wine which is spilled in my cellar! How many that pass a whole month, or even two, without tasting oil! And thou, who expectest to enjoy eternal happiness, thou drinkest wine and eatest large fish, thou art well lodged, and in common with all the wicked thou art made warm and comfortable, safe under a coverlet that cost thirty-six pieces of silver! Certainly, while living so much at thine ease, thou shouldst not think of sharing the joys prepared in the other world for the Saints. But against thee will be pronounced the sentence pronounced against the rich man in the Gospel: *Thou hadst plenty during thy lifetime, and the poor had nothing but misery; therefore, they are now in joy and thou art in torments.*' God be praised! This is the first and the last night that the humble John will lie under such a coverlet. Will it not be much more just, and much more pleasing to God, that a hundred and forty-four of those who are the brethren of Our Lord as well as thyself should be covered, and not thou alone, for with one piece of silver there may be had four little coverlets?"

Day had no sooner come than he called his stewards, and ordered them to sell the coverlet as soon as possible. It had weighed so heavy on him during the night! . . . They set about doing as he required. But, during the day, the person who had given it to the Saint saw it exposed for sale. He bought it and sent it to him a second time. The next day the Saint hurried it off to be sold again. The donor bought it another time for thirty-six pieces of silver, and returned it to the Patriarch. On receiving it, the Saint exclaimed with a countenance that bore testimony of his gratitude, "We shall see which of the two will be tired first."

Now, this man was very rich, and the blessed Prelate drew from him gradually and gently a large quantity of things, remarking

[1] *Luc.*, xvi.

gaily that, with the intention of giving to the poor, one may plunder the rich without committing sin, and strip them even to their shirts, especially when they are avaricious and devoid of pity for their neighbours.[1]

Where did the Eastern Vincent de Paul find this tender love for the poor? At the same source where the Western Vincent de Paul found it a thousand years later on, that is to say, in the Sacred Heart of the Saviour, who became poor in order to make us rich. Besides, the holy patriarch had continually before his eyes an admirable example of charity, which he used often to relate. This relation would touch his heart, as I hope it will touch yours.

When I was in Cyprus, he would say, I had a most faithful servant, one who remained chaste till death. He told me word for word what I am going to tell you. While I was in Africa, he says to me, I stayed at the house of a collector of dues for the emperor. The man was very rich, but had no pity for the afflicted. One winter's day several poor persons, settling themselves in the sun to get a little heat, began to speak well of the houses that gave them alms, and to pray to God for them; they then began to blame the stinginess of those that would give them nothing. One of them having mentioned the officer that I was serving, they inquired all round whether he had done any of them a charity, and it turned out that not a single one of them had ever received the least alms from him.

Whereupon there was one of the party that said, What will you give me if, this very day, I draw something from the miser? They agreed to a wager. Forthwith he went off to take his stand near my master's door, in order to meet him coming home. God permitted that my master should arrive just at the same time as a beast laden with loaves from the baker's. The poor man asked for an alms. My master was so enraged at his importunity that, not seeing any stones near, he took up a loaf and threw it at his head. The poor man picked it up, and ran off to his companions, in order to let them see that he had received something from an ungenerous hand.

Two days afterwards, the collector fell sick. He saw himself, in a dream, obliged to give an account of all his actions: they were all weighed in a pair of scales. He saw, on one side of him, a troop of most hideous, black men; on the other, a troop of women clad in white, whose look was terrible. The latter could not find in his life any good action to put in one of the scales, while the

[1] It is not Communism that is meant here, but Charity. The former takes, the latter asks.

former had filled up the other with all his bad actions. The women clad in white said to one another sadly, Shall we then find nothing good? At length, one of them said, I can see nothing, if not the loaf that he gave a couple of days ago to Jesus Christ, but against his will. They immediately put this loaf into the scale that was borne up. Then they said to the collector, Add to this loaf, otherwise you shall not escape out of the hands of these black men.

My master, on awakening, felt that the vision had represented nothing to him but what was most true, and he said with tears, Alas! if a loaf that I threw in a rage profited me so much, from how many evils may he deliver himself who gives with a free heart to the poor! From that moment he became so charitable that he did not spare even his own body. For once, as he was going, according to custom, at break of day to his office, he met a sailor who had been saved naked from a wreck, and who fell at his feet, begging some help. My master took off his cloak, which was the best article that he wore at the time, and gave it to him. This poor man, not venturing to appear in such a very fine garment, gave it to a clothes-dealer to sell. My master, as he was returning, saw his cloak exhibited for sale, and was very much pained. When he came into his house, he would not eat anything, but shut himself up in his room, where he took a seat, saying, I was not worthy that this poor man should remember me.

While nursing his grief, he fell asleep, and saw in a dream a man as bright as the sun. This man carried a cross on his shoulder, and wore the cloak that my master had given to the sailor. Peter, said he to my master, for this was his name, why dost thou weep? He answered, I weep, Lord! because those with whom I shared the goods that Thou didst give me, were ashamed to have received them. Then he who appeared to him said, showing him the cloak, Dost thou know this? I have made use of it since thou gavest it to me, and I thank thee for it; for I was benumbed with cold, and thou didst cover me. My master awoke in wonderful surprise, and said, admiring the happiness of the poor, The Lord be blessed! Since Jesus Christ dwells in the poor, I will not die till I become one of them.

In effect, he called to him a slave whom he had bought, and whom he employed to write. I want, said he, to intrust a secret to you; but if you speak of it to any person in the world, or if you will not do what I command you, you may rest assured that I will sell yourself to the barbarians. After speaking to him in this manner, he gave him ten pounds weight of gold, and continued, Go and buy some wares with it, and then take me and bring me to Jerusalem, and there sell me to some Christian, and give to the poor the

price that you will get for me. This man refusing to comply with such an order, he said to him a second time, I tell you that, if you do not sell me, I will sell yourself to the barbarians, as I have already declared. The secretary resolved, therefore, to obey him.

Arrived at Jerusalem, he met a goldsmith, an intimate friend of his, one who had suffered heavy losses. In their conversation, the secretary said, I advise you, Zoilus, to buy a slave that I have; he is so good and so wise that he would be taken for a senator. Surprised to find that he had a slave, the goldsmith said to him, I assure you I am not able to buy him. Borrow, replied his friend, and do what I say—buy my slave—for he is very good, and God will bless you on account of him. Zoilus followed this advice, and bought him for thirty pieces of silver, miserably clad as he was. The secretary, having thus left his master, went away to Constantinople, in order the better to keep the secret confided to him, and to distribute among the poor the money of this sale without retaining any part thereof.

Peter, on his side, employed himself in matters very new to him: he sometimes prepared his master's food, and sometimes washed his clothes. He also mortified himself with very severe fasts. Zoilus, who saw his family prospering beyond all that he could have dared to expect, had much veneration for the extraordinary humility, the incredible virtue of Peter. One day he said to him, I will set you free, that henceforth you may live with me as my brother. But Peter declined this favour.

His master had also remarked that he had patiently allowed himself to be wronged and struck by the other slaves, who looked on him as a fool, and never called him anything else. When they treated him in this manner, and he fell asleep, weighed down with sorrows, the same man that had appeared to him in Africa came in a dream before his eyes, clad in his cloak, and holding the thirty pieces of silver, the price of his liberty, and said to him, Peter, my brother, I received the silver for which thou wast sold; be not afflicted, therefore, but have patience until thou art recognised for what thou art.

A little while afterwards, some goldsmiths from Africa, who were paying a visit to the holy places, were invited to dinner by his master. Peter, while waiting on them at table, recognised them, and they, considering him, began to whisper to one another, How like this man is to my lord Peter, the receiver of taxes! The noble slave, who perceived what was passing, concealed his face as well as he could. This precaution did not prevent them from saying to Zoilus, Indeed you are a happy man; for, if we are not mistaken, you have in your service a person of public eminence. And,

as they did not know that the work of the kitchen and his fasts had greatly changed his features, they looked at him again for a very long time and with much attention. At length, one of them said—Most assuredly, it is my lord Peter The emperor is afflicted that he has been absent so long, without ever hearing any news of him.

Peter, who had gone out, having heard these words, laid down the dish that he was carrying, and, instead of entering the room, ran to the street door. The keeper of the key was a deaf mute from his birth, and understood nothing but by signs. The servant of God, who was in a hurry to leave, said to him, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ. The deaf mute immediately heard, and answered, Yes, my lord. Open the door for me, added Peter. Yes, my lord, answered the man a second time. And instantly he rose, and opened it for him. Peter had scarcely crossed the threshold when this poor man, overjoyed that he could hear and speak, began to cry out, My lord! my lord! All the people in the house were amazed to hear him speak.

He went on to say,—He who attended to the cooking is gone away running. But he is not a guilty fugitive; on the contrary, he is a great servant of God. For when he said to me, I command thee in the name of the Lord, I saw issuing from his mouth a flame that came and touched my ears, and that very moment I heard and spoke.

This miracle having filled them all with joy, they rushed out in search of Peter, but he had disappeared, never to return. The whole house, and the master himself, then did penance for having treated Peter with contempt, and particularly those who had called him a fool.

This example of charity, so proper to inflame our hearts, as it inflamed the heart of St. John the Almoner, found many others like it in the early ages, as we have shown when speaking of the manners of our ancestors in the faith. Are we the heirs of this admirable charity? What have we done with this inheritance bequeathed to us? What are our works in comparison with those of our predecessors? Serious questions, which we should sometimes address to ourselves in presence of God and of our conscience!

Meanwhile, the illustrious Patriarch of Alexandria, having reached a very advanced age, withdrew to the Isle of Cyprus, where he had been born. He there closed his life of charity by a deed which fully revealed the goodness of his heart. As soon as he arrived at his native place, he called for pen and paper, and made his last will thus: "I, John, who of myself am only a poor sinner, but who have been delivered from sin and made free by the favour which it pleased God to do me in raising me to the dignity of the

priesthood, thank the Lord most humbly for having heard the prayer which I made to Him, not to have any other property at the hour of my death than one piece of money. I also thank Him for this, that, having been raised to the dignity of Patriarch of the Holy Church of Alexandria, wherein sums almost infinite passed through my hands, He bestowed on me the grace to know that all those things belonged to Him, and to give to Him what was already His; and, inasmuch as this single piece of money which I still have belongs to Thee, O my God, no less than all the rest, I give it to Thee by giving it to the poor."

Such was the last will of this great man. Scarcely had it been written, when his beautiful soul took flight to the God of Charity.

This will reminds us of another no less proper to acquaint us with the wonderful change which Christianity wrought in the minds of men. Let us search all profane antiquity, and we shall neve find anything to compare with these two masterpieces—glorious monuments of that Religion which inspired them. This second will which we have mentioned, is that of St. Perpetuus, Bishop of Tours, who lived in the fifth century. It runs thus:—

"In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. I, Perpetuus, a sinner, Priest of the Church of Tours, would not die without making known my last wishes. O you, then, that are my bowels, my beloved brethren, my crown, my joy, *my lords*, my children; O you, the poor of Jesus Christ, that are in want, that beg your bread; O you sick, you widows, you orphans: I declare that I name and appoint you my heirs. Excepting what I have remitted to my debtors, and what I have given to my Church, I bequeath to you all that I possess in lands, in pasturages, in meadows, in woods, in vineyards, in houses, in gardens, in streams, in mills, in gold, in silver, in garments, and in all things else. I will that as soon as possible after my death, all these goods be sold, and that the proceeds of the sale be divided into three portions: two of which shall be distributed among poor men at the discretion of Priest Agrarius and Count Agilo; the third shall be sent to the virgin Dadolena, to be distributed among widows and poor women.[1] Signed, Perpetuus, Bishop of Tours."

[1] Like the tradition of Faith, the tradition of Charity has been preserved, is still preserved, among true Christians. We might give a thousand illustrations of this: one will suffice. All the world knows that the virtuous Monsignor d'Aviau, Archbishop of Bordeaux,* had a habit of giving to the poor whatever he possessed, so that he would refuse himself things that he most urgently needed. For a long time his valet had been pressing him to renew a

* Who died in 1827.

After making known the holy Patriarch of Alexandria, whom Providence raised up to relieve the churches and the inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, plundered by the Persians, it is time to show this same Providence manifesting itself with no less splendour in the punishment of a guilty people.

Like the Roman Empire, the ancient monarchy of the Persians had rejected the light of the Gospel: it had even bathed during long years in the blood of martyrs. To fill up the measure of its iniquities, it had laid, as we have seen, its sacrilegious hands on the Saviour's Cross, the true Ark of the New Covenant.

Now, you know what it cost the Philistines for having touched the ancient Ark and desired to keep it among them. Still greater punishments should fall on those who carried off the true Cross. In point of fact, total ruin was about to avenge this sacrilegious robbery, as well as the death of so many thousands of martyrs; to sanction the great law that all empires come into existence in order to contribute to the glory of Jesus Christ; and to repeat for all ages the assurance that no people ever says with impunity to the Lamb that rules the world, *We will not have Thee reign over us.*[1]

The first mortal blow struck at the empire of the Persians was

little his wardrobe. "My lord has no trousers to put on him!" he would repeat from day to day. "What is the matter with you, my friend?" answered the holy Archbishop; "I have my poor in want of bread; we shall see to that later on." At length, weary of obtaining nothing, the valet mentioned his lordship's *obstinacy* to a pious and charitable lady whom we might name, for all the poor of Bordeaux name her in their prayers. She went off to the worthy prelate and said to him, "My lord, I know a poor unfortunate man who is very much to be pitied; he has no trousers, and if you can come to his aid you will do him a great service." "How so? He has no trousers!" exclaimed the good Archbishop, quickly; "that is not decent; send this money as soon as possible to your poor friend, and let him be clothed."

A few days afterwards the valet brought his master a beautiful pair of velvet trousers, quite new. The worthy prelate wanted to be angry. "What does this mean?" he said; "I forbade you to get anything made for me." "But it was my lord himself. . . ." How so?" "Yes; the poor man for whom Madame C—— L—— came to intercede . . ." "Well?" "The poor man, my lord, was yourself!"

[1] The empire of the Parthians was the only one that the Romans could never subjugate. Parthia had always been subject to the Persians until about the year 256 B.C., when Arsaces, a very courageous young man, excited it to rebel, and formed out of it a terrible empire, of which he became the first ruler. His successors were called *Arsacides*. Their empire continued glorious till the time of Artabanus. This prince was slain by Artaxerxes, who restored the empire of the Persians in the year 226 A.C. Parthia and Persia, united, formed henceforth the second empire of the Parthians and Persians. It came to an end in the year 632, in the person of Isdegardes, slain by Omar, one of Mahomet's lieutenants.

the celebrated victory which the Emperor Heraclius gained over their king, Chosroes, the same that had taken Jerusalem and carried off the true Cross. The vanquished monarch betook himself to flight, and, after eight days' travelling, he stopped to spend the night in a poor cabin, which one could not enter but by creeping. Reduced to such a sad condition, and attacked by a violent dysentery, he named as his successor one of his sons, for whom he had a special affection, to the prejudice of the eldest. The last-named rebelled against his father, arrested him, let him die of starvation in a prison, and took possession of the kingdom. The new King of Persia proposed a reconciliation to Heraclius. He returned to him all the Christians that were held captive in Persia,—among the number, Zachary, the Patriarch of Jerusalem,—together with the Holy Cross, carried off fourteen years previously.

During all this time it had lain in its case, the seal unbroken by the Persians: it was recognised as intact by the Patriarch himself. It was returned into his hands in the very same state in which it had been taken. Everyone admired the protection of God over this precious relic. The Emperor, coming back, entered Constantinople with all the pomp of a triumph. Mounted on a chariot drawn by four elephants, he caused the Holy Cross to be borne before him as the most glorious trophy of his victories. In the early part of spring, he went himself to Jerusalem, in order to return thanks to God for his success, and to replace the Holy Cross in the Church of the Resurrection. A truly Christian monarch, he would walk in the footsteps of the Saviour, and accordingly carried the Cross himself on his shoulders to the top of Mount Calvary. This was a solemn festival for all Christians, and the Church still celebrates the memory of it on the 14th of September.[1] We shall enter into further particulars on this point in the Fourth Part of the Catechism.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the great miracles of protection which Thou hast never ceased to work in favour of Thy Church. Grant us the grace to love the poor like St. John the Almoner, and to venerate Thy Holy Cross like the pious Christians of Jerusalem.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never pass a Church without making the sign of the cross.*

[1] See Fleury, l. XXXVII. p. 330

LESSON XXX.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES.)

Judgment of God on the Empire of the Persians (*continued*). Mahomet; his Mission, Character, and Doctrine. Ravages of the Mussulmans in Africa. The Church attacked: Monothelism. The Church defended: St. Sophronius. General Council of Constantinople. The Church consoled and propagated: Conversion of Friesland and Holland; St. Willibrord.

That the glory of success may be referred to Him alone, God always makes use of what is most weak in order to accomplish the greatest things. He wishes that men should thoroughly understand that it is He who rewards and punishes, lest they should despise the invisible hand that holds the reins of empires, that raises or lowers nations according to their virtues or their crimes. Never was this truth made more apparent than in the event that we are now going to relate. The formidable empire of the Persians or Parthians—the terror of the Romans—was doomed to perish. What power should be commissioned to execute the sentence of the divine justice? That of an obscure and ignorant man, whose cradle was away in the sands of Arabia: I mean Mahomet!

This Attila of the East, sent by Heaven to punish ungrateful peoples—rebels against the Lamb that rules the world—was born in the desert of Arabia Petrea in the year 570. His father was a Pagan, and his mother a Jew. He lost both while yet young, and was brought up by an uncle, who put him to business at the age of twenty. Mahomet employed himself about caravans that trafficked from Mecca to Damascus. On his return to Mecca, he married a rich widow for whom he was agent. She made him a present of all her wealth, which was very great. Having reached a state far beyond his expectations, Mahomet resolved to become the leader of his nation. For this purpose he knew that he should draw largely on the credulity of the Arabians. Nothing was wanting to him in laying plans for the attainment of his end.

Little as his history is read or his Alcoran consulted, it is well known that this man was naturally cunning, deceitful, hypocritical, revengeful, ambitious, violent; that a crime cost him nothing in order to satisfy his passions. His followers themselves do not dare to deny it. The only excuse that they offer is that in his strange doings Mahomet was inspired by God: as if God inspired crimes!

At the age of forty, the impostor began to give himself out as a prophet. Saying that he was inspired by God, without showing any proof thereof, he invented a new religion, which was a mixture of Judaism and Christianity, with the addition of a few errors peculiar to the inhabitants of Arabia. He composed his *Alcoran:* this word means *Reading*, as we say Scripture. It is the gospel of the Mahometans. Mahomet, who could neither read nor write, had it drawn up by another.

To appreciate the value of Mahometanism, we must consider it in its dogmas, in its morals, in its laws, in its effects, and in its establishment.

1. *In its Dogmas.* Here are the chief articles of its creed. There is only one God, without any distinction of Persons. Mahomet is His prophet. Men are necessarily predestined either to heaven or to hell (a dogma that annihilates the liberty of man, and makes God the Author of sin). After death there is a particular judgment; at the end of the world there shall be a general judgment, when Mahometans alone shall be saved. The wicked shall cross *Poul Serro*, a sharp bridge, and be thrown headlong into hell. The good shall go to paradise, which is a beautiful garden, watered with several rivers, where they shall enjoy all kinds of sensual pleasures.

We are not to suppose that all these points of doctrine, good and bad, are clearly set forth in the Alcoran; no, they are wrapped up in a tissue of fables, puerilities, and absurdities. Every Mussulman is bound to believe all these idle tales, as so many revelations that have issued immediately from the mouth of God Himself. Mahomet begins the Alcoran by declaring that this book admits of no doubt on any point, and that a terrible punishment awaits all persons who will not believe it.

2. *In its Morals.* The morals proposed by the impostor were much worse than his dogmas. With the greatest severity he prescribes rites and exterior acts, such as ablutions before prayer, abstinence from wine and pork, circumcision, the fast of the month Ramadan, the sanctification of Friday, prayer five times a day, and a journey to Mecca once in a lifetime. As for interior virtues, such as the love of God, piety, mortification of the senses, humility, gratitude to God, confidence in the divine goodness, repentance, &c., there is no question made of them in the Alcoran.

A Mussulman believes firmly that, without a minute and scrupulous observance of the ceremonial, the purest heart, the most sincere faith, the most ardent charity, will not suffice to make one pleasing to God, but that the pilgrimage to Mecca or the drinking of water in which the old robe of the Prophet has been dipped will

efface all kinds of crimes. Far from making any account of that most amiable virtue, chastity, Mahomet permitted by his doctrine and authorised by his example whatever is most opposed to it: polygamy, divorce, and horrors that we cannot describe.

3. *In its Laws.* The great law of the Alcoran is that law of universal hatred which reigned in the world before the establishment of Christianity. "Fight against the infidels," that is, against all who are not Mahometans, says the Prophet of Mecca to his followers, "until every false religion is destroyed. Put them to death, do not spare them; and, when you have weakened their power by slaughter, reduce the rest to slavery, and crush them with tributes."[1] There is no law more sacred in the eyes of Mussulmans. They consider themselves bound in conscience to detest all those whom they regard as infidels: Christians, Jews, Indians. All kinds of wrongs, extortions, insults, outrages, are permitted, are even commanded them on this point: it is one of the first lessons given them in childhood. History tells us that they have but too faithfully observed this barbarous law. To cite a single instance, of twenty thousand towns that were in Africa before the invasion of the Mahometans, scarcely any were left.[2]

4. *In its Effects.* The corruption of both sexes; the degradation and dishonour of women, that is to say, half the human race condemned to shame and misery; the spread of slavery; a general ignorance, baffling every remedy during so many ages,[3] and holding Mahometans in barbarism, after dragging down to the same level every people vanquished by their arms; the depopulation of the fairest regions of the earth: these are the effects of Mahometanism wherever it predominates.

5. *In its Establishment.* Mahometanism was not established by miracles. When the inhabitants of Mecca asked Mahomet for the proofs of his divine mission, he answered that God had not sent him to perform miracles, but to propagate religion with the sword. The cup of pleasure in one hand and the sword in the other, Mahomet was satisfied to say, Believe or die! It was to voluptuousness and violence that he owed his success. He established his religion by giving a free course to the passions, and slaughtering those who refused to embrace it: while the Apostles established theirs, the Christian Religion, by putting a bridle on all the passions and letting themselves be slaughtered. There is nothing beyond

[1] Alcor., c. xiii., v. 12, 39; c. ix., v. 30; c. xlvii., v. 4.

[2] See Seigneri, *The Infidel Inexcusable*, 2nd part, art. *Mahomet.*

[3] What are the words of the philosopher, Condorcet, speaking of the Turks? *Their religion condemns them to an incurable stupidity.*

what is natural on the one side; on the other, everything is manifestly divine.[1]

Mahometanism divided almost at its origin into two great sects: that of Ali, and that of Omar These gave rise to many others, so that at the present day we count more than sixty of them. A thing worthy of remark: the Mahometan *Variations* have had the same beginning, the same progress, and the same results as the Protestant![2]

In the meantime, Mahomet, despite his contempt for miracles, saw clearly enough that they were necessary to establish a religion: unable to work real ones, he should try to pass off something like them. The frequent attacks of epilepsy to which he was subject afforded him an opportunity of confirming the opinion entertained of his communications with heaven. He pretended that the time of his fits was that in which the Supreme Being enlightened him, and that his convulsions proceeded from the deep impressions made on him by the glory of the minister whom the Deity sent to him. By his account, the Archangel Gabriel had led him on an ass from Mecca to Jerusalem, whence, after showing him all the Saints and Patriarchs since Adam, he brought him back the same night to Mecca.

Notwithstanding these fine visions, a conspiracy was formed against the seer. The new apostle had to flee for his life from Mecca to Medina, another city of Arabia: this occurrence is called the *Hegira*, a word that means *flight* or *persecution*. It happened on the 16th of July, 622, a memorable epoch, from which the Mahometans reckon their years. The fugitive prophet became a conquering one. He forbade his disciples to dispute on doctrine with strangers, and commanded them to give no other answer to the objections of opponents than the sword. To act according to this principle, he raised troops who supported his mission, and henceforth till his death he never laid down his arms. The last ten years of his life were only one series of battles, or rather they set on foot a system of brigandage that extended after him. His generals made vast conquests, and Mahomet, from being an obscure trader with camels, became one of the most powerful monarchs of Asia; but he did not long enjoy the fruits of his crimes.

A Jewess, wishing to test whether he was really a prophet, poisoned a shoulder of mutton that she was about to serve up to

[1] See Fleury, l. XXXVIII.; Bergier, art. *Mahomet, Hist. abr. de l'Eglise*; Maracci, *Alcorani textus universus*; Patavii, 1698, in fol. These works contain the best and most reliable information on the Alcoran.

[2] See *History of Persia*, by Malcolm.

him. The founder of Mahometanism did not notice that the meat was poisoned till he had eaten of it. Gradually wasting away under the influence of the poison, he died in the sixty-second year of his age, the year of our Lord 632. Such was the end of Mahomet, the author of a fierce superstition, and the founder of an empire terrible to Christians, destined to punish their crimes, and to be an instrument of the divine vengeance against a great portion of the globe. In this sense the establishment of the reign of Mahomet is a miracle, but a miracle that proves the divinity of Christianity, by rendering visible that Providence which watches over the Church, and which, at the appointed moment, calls forth the Apostles of its holy doctrine, or the avengers of its outraged laws, and the exterminators of those peoples who have dared to revolt from Jesus Christ.

This truth becomes still more evident when we consider that the Mahometans first ravaged those provinces of Asia and Africa which had been guilty of heresy, and then destroyed the empire of the Persians, covered with the blood of martyrs. Crime draws to itself punishment, as the loadstone does iron.

In effect, Omar, the father-in-law and lieutenant of Mahomet, fell on Persia, and put all that he met to fire and sword. Isdegerdes, its last king, perished in this war. Having become master of Persia, and also successor of Mahomet, Omar continued his terrible mission. Palestine, Syria, Phœnicia, and Egypt yielded one after another to the arms of the ferocious Mussulman. Everywhere the troops of Omar committed the most dreadful outrages in order to establish Mahometanism—a worthy mode of preaching a monstrous religion! In this war was burned, it is said, the famous library of Alexandria: the conquerors, ignorant and barbarous, would have no other knowledge than that of the Coran. Meanwhile, nothing could withstand their power, and they carried their conquests far into Africa. One might say that they were a wild torrent, broken loose from its banks, and spreading destruction on all sides. Let us say rather that the Mussulmans, like the hordes of Attila, were a scourge sent by Heaven to punish guilty peoples.

It is thus that the plan of Providence for the preservation and the development of Religion appears at every step. Under the Old Testament, the terrible monarchy of the Assyrians remained for eight centuries with arms in hand close to the frontiers of Judea, in order to keep the Jews to the observance of the Law, and to punish them when they had abandoned it for the worship of idols. In the same manner, under the Gospel, we see this watchful Providence calling barbarous peoples, one after another, to punish Christians, and to oblige them to have recourse to the Lord; send-

.nst West and East those two men who cannot be better named than as the great scourges of God—Attila and Mahomet;[1] and, finally, leaving the terrible Ottoman Empire encamped on the frontiers of Europe, ready at a moment's notice to rush forth when there is a crime of high treason against the Divine Majesty to be punished among Christians. More than once, in succeeding ages, we shall see the Turks exercising the fearful commission given them by Providence.

While Mahometanism was tearing away immense countries from the Church, a new heresy rose up to add to her grief. The secret partisans of Eutyches taught that there is only one will in Jesus Christ: this is what is meant in Greek by the name *Monothelism*, which is given to their sect. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, which recognises two natures in Jesus Christ, also recognises two wills in Him: the divine will and the human will, which are never opposed, but yet are quite distinct. The error of the Monothelites was obstinately defended by Sergius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who left no stone unturned to gain credence for it. In accordance with an immutable law, Providence opposed to the champion of error a champion of truth: this was St. Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The Saint began by employing every gentle means imaginable to bring back the heretics to unity. He went to Cyrus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, one of the patrons of Monothelism. He fell on his knees before him, and implored him with tears in his eyes not to afflict any longer the Catholic Church, their common mother: but all his efforts were useless. Seeing that there was nothing to be gained at Alexandria, he went to Constantinople, in order to try if he could make any impression on the Patriarch Sergius, infatuated with the same doctrine. He found Sergius in the same dispositions as Cyrus. Sophronius lost no time. Returning to Jerusalem, he issued a synodal letter in which he clearly laid down the Catholic doctrine, with all the proofs that establish it. The Saint sent copies of this letter to Pope Honorius and the Patriarch Sergius. But he did not think it enough to write in defence of the attacked dogma. In order to unmask the sophisms and to frustrate the schemes of heresy, whose abettors were numerous and powerful, he extended his views much further.

One day, taking by the hand Stephen, Bishop of Doria, the eldest of his suffragans, he led him to Mount Calvary, and said to

[1] Like the Huns, the Mahometans seem conscious of their avenging mission. It is a proverb among them that where the Sultan's horse sets foot, the grass never grows again. (*Boter. in relat.*)

him, "If you be needless of the dangers to which the Faith is exposed, you shall render to Jesus Christ, who was crucified on this spot, an account thereof, when He shall come to judge the living and the dead. Do then what I cannot do personally by reason of the invasion of the Saracens. Go to the Apostolic See, where the foundations of sound doctrine are laid. Inform the holy personages there of all that is occurring here, and do not cease entreating them until they judge this new doctrine and condemn it canonically." Stephen set out at once for Rome, and, during the ten years that he spent in this city, he laboured with much zeal for the condemnation of Monothelism: he obtained it in the end.

At the request of the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, Pope Agatho named three legates to preside, in his name, at a Council, which was held at Constantinople in the year 680. After a careful examination of the new doctrine, it was found to be contrary to the Gospel and to Tradition. The Monothelites were convicted of having mutilated passages in the Fathers, and brought the same forward in support of their doctrines. The letter of St. Sophronius, which they had violently attacked, was also examined, and was declared perfectly conformable to the true Faith, to the doctrine of the Apostles and Fathers. After these proceedings, a Profession of Faith was drawn up. Strict adherence was therein declared to the previous Councils. Then judgment was pronounced:—"We decide that there are in Jesus Christ two wills and two operations, and we forbid the contrary to be taught. We abhor and reject the impious dogmas of heretics who admit only one will and one operation in Jesus Christ, finding these dogmas contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles, to the decrees of Councils, and to the sentiments of all the Fathers."

The Council next struck with its anathema the authors of the sect. The acts were subscribed to by the Legates; by all the Bishops, to the number of a hundred and sixty; and by the Emperor himself, who gave orders for their execution, and supported them with all the weight of his authority. In effect, the error soon fell to the ground, and all disturbances ceased. This was the Sixth General Council.

In order to expiate the crimes and to repair the scandals that schism and heresy were drawing in their train, we see during this century a great many elect souls taking the way of the desert, and offering themselves as living victims to an offended God. Among the number was St. Anastasius the Sinaite. We see others shedding their blood for the Faith, and gaining the victory for the Church—winning over new nations even, to console her for the considerable losses that she has sustained in the East. The light of

truth, like that of the sun, never leaves one country but to shine on another. This economy of the divine wisdom and justice enables the Church to recover in one land what she loses in another; and thus she remains always Catholic. In proportion as a knowledge of the Gospel was lessened in the East by the unceasing ravages of heresy and by the conquests of the Mahometans, it was extended on the side of the North by the apostolic labours of numerous missionaries.

This time again, as always, it was a Pope that procured the benefits of Christianity and civilisation, inseparable companions, for Ancient Germany. By his orders, some holy religious of France and England set out for this vast region. Thanks to their zeal, most of the Germans, barbarians and idolators as they were, became civilised and Christianised. Penetrating those immense tracts almost covered with forests, the missionaries converted the peoples there, founded sees, established monasteries, and opened academies and schools for the study of the sciences; they also persuaded the inhabitants to cut down a great portion of their trees, and to build towns and cities.[1]

Praise to the Order of St. Benedict! From its bosom went forth the apostles of Germany, as in the preceding century it had given those of England. St. Willibrord, who established the Gospel in Friesland, Holland, and Denmark, was a Benedictine. This great man was born in England about the year 658. He had not passed his seventh year when his parents entrusted him, according to the custom of those days, to the Benedictine religious. Willibrord, having early learned to bear the yoke of the Lord, found it always sweet and light. The better to preserve the fruits of the education which he had received, he took the habit in the monastery of Ripon, being still very young. His progress in virtue was as rapid as in learning.

Meanwhile the whole of pious England was in prayer for the conversion of Friesland, to which the Gospel was being announced. Willibrord obtained leave to pass over into this country. Friesland is a considerable region situated along the Rhine and the German Ocean. The Saint departed with eleven other missionaries, and disembarked at the mouth of the Rhine. Scarcely had the twelve apostles set foot on this uncultivated land, when Willibrord undertook a journey to Rome in order to ask the blessing of Pope Sergius, and full authority to preach the Gospel to the idolatrous nations. The Sovereign Pontiff, knowing his zeal and sanctity, granted him

[1] *Abrégé de l'histoire de Saint Benoit*, T. I., p. 2.
[2] See Hélyot T. IV., p. 16.

the most ample privileges, and gave him relics for the consecration of churches that might be built. He returned as soon as possible, so desirous was he to gain to Jesus Christ a multitude of souls groaning under the power of the devil.

Willibrord and his companions preached the Faith with astonishing success. The episcopal unction which the Saint received at this time only gave new activity to his zeal. Not content with planting Religion in Friesland, he pushed on farther towards the North and arrived in Denmark. But the king of this country was a very wicked and cruel man; and his example, which had much influence on his subjects, raised an almost insuperable obstacle to their conversion. Willibrord was content with purchasing thirty Danish boys, whom he instructed, baptised, and brought away with him.

As he was coming back, he was overtaken by a storm and driven on an island called Fositeland, on the coast of Friesland. The Danes and Frisons entertained a singular reverence for this island, which had been consecrated to their god, Fosite. They would have regarded as impious and sacrilegious the person who should dare to kill any of the animals that lived on it, to eat anything that it produced, or to speak while drawing water from a well that was in it. The Saint, affected at their blindness, wished to rid them of so gross a superstition. He caused some of the animals to be killed, which he and his companions ate, and baptised three children in the well, pronouncing aloud the words prescribed by the Church. The Pagans were expecting to see them drop dead; but, finding that nothing happened to them, they did not know whether to attribute this strange result to the patience or the powerlessness of their god.

The king of the Frisons was transported with rage when he heard of what had occurred. He ordered lots to be drawn on three successive days, and thrice each day, with a view of putting to death him on whom the lot should fall. God did not permit it to fall on Willibrord; but it fell on one of his companions, who was sacrificed to superstition and died a martyr of Jesus Christ.

By their tears, their prayers, and their zealous labours, the holy missionary and his companions destroyed Paganism in the greater part of Zealand, Holland, and Friesland. The Frisons, who had previously been a barbarous people, were gradually civilised, and they became remarkable for their virtues as well as for their advancement in the arts and sciences. The Saint built many monasteries among them, including those of Epternac and Sturem. At length, after fifty years of toil, the man of God prepared himself in retirement for his passage to eternity, and died in 738.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank thee for the continual care which Thou hast taken to spread the Gospel. I adore Thy justice, which withdraws Religion from those who do not profit by it. Grant us the zeal of St. Sophronius and the charity of the holy Apostle of Friesland.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will be careful not to resist the inspirations of grace.*

LESSON XXXI.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (EIGHTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church consoled and propagated (*continued*): Conversion of Germany; St. Boniface; Foundation of the Abbey of Fulda; Martyrdom of St. Boniface. The Church attacked: Saracens in Spain and France. The Church defended: Charles Martel. The Church consoled: Martyrdom of the Monks of Lerins. The Church attacked: Heresy of the Iconoclasts; Constantine Copronymus, a Persecutor.

In proportion as the light of Faith grew dim in the East, it shone out with daily increasing splendour on the side of the North. The conquests of St. Willibrord were only a prelude to greater ones. In vain does the devil, attacked, as it were, in the very heart of his empire, arm his worshippers; in vain do his frightened priests make their vast forests ring with their war-cries: all is useless! The hour that Satan dreads so much is come. His sceptre is about to be broken, and the nations of Germany, bowed down so long under his galling yoke, are about to be set free.

This time again a child of St. Benedict shall be the instrument of Providence. The apostle of Germany was St. Boniface. Born in England about the year 680, he showed an early relish for the things of God. The love of prayer and zeal for the conversion of souls—those sentiments of noble hearts—were developed in him by the edifying conduct and sound instruction of Benedictines, charged with his education. While yet young, he entered this Order, famous alike for the learning and the holiness of its members.

Having attained the age of thirty years and taught the sciences with much success, he was raised by his Abbot to the priesthood. From this period the Saint seemed to burn with new zeal for the glory of God. Day and night he bewailed the misfortunes of those

peoples who were plunged in the darkness of idolatry. Animated with these pious dispositions, he consulted Heaven to know if he was called to the life of a missionary. Unable to doubt his vocation, he addressed himself to his Abbot, and obtained permission from him to go and preach the Gospel to the heathens of the North.

First of all he went to Rome, and presented himself to Pope St. Gregory II., in order to ask his blessing together with the faculties which he needed. The Holy Father, having the utmost esteem for the servant of God, received him with many marks of distinction, and gave him full authority to preach the Gospel to the idolatrous peoples of Germany. This time again it was from the hills of the Eternal City that the beams of civilisation burst on the North of Europe.

The holy missionary set out without delay. Bavaria, Thuringia, and Saxony were one after another the scenes of his zeal. At his voice the inhabitants came in crowds to ask for Baptism, and built churches on the ruins of the temples of their idols. Some time afterwards he was consecrated Archbishop of Mayence. His new dignity did not prevent him from continuing his apostolic labours. Having penetrated into Hesse, he caused a great oak-tree consecrated to Jupiter to be cut down, and made use of its trunk to erect a chapel in honour of the Prince of the Apostles.

Anxious to inspire the barbarians of the North with that spirit of meekness and piety commanded in the Gospel, Boniface obtained from England some religious men and women of approved virtue, and gave them the management of the monasteries which he had built in Thuringia and Bavaria. He also wrote frequently to his own country, that various things of which he stood in need might be sent to him: among the rest, the Epistles of St. Peter, written in letters of gold. Hereby, he proposed to inspire sensual men with a greater respect for our divine oracles. He wished also to satisfy his devotion towards the Prince of the Apostles, whom he styled the patron of his mission.

The tender charity which in our days unites the members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the missionaries of the five divisions of the globe, united in those remote ages the Churches of England and Germany. So true it is that the spirit of Christianity is ever the same! We see, by some letters of St. Boniface, that on both sides there were engagements to recommend to God the souls of those who had departed this life.

In order to secure the fruit of his labours, by perpetuating Christianity in Germany, the man of God crowned all his other works by one of those wondrous foundations which none but a Saint could venture to undertake. In 746 he laid the foundations

of the celebrated abbey of Fulda, which, during many centuries, was a centre of light to Germany, a nursery of great men, in whom the most wonderful learning was united with the most child-like piety.

The abbey of Fulda was situated in the circle of the Upper Rhine, on the River Fulda. The Saint, having chosen a particular locality, went to Carloman, Prince of the Franks, to ask him if he might establish a community of religious there, a thing which had never been done in the country before. Carloman granted him the desired site with about four square miles of land in the neighbourhood. A few months afterwards a church was raised in this place, together with a monastery, which took the name of Fulda, on account of the River Fulda passing close by it: its first Abbot was St. Sturmius.

In a little while the number of religious here amounted to more than five hundred. They led a very austere and at the same time active life. Experienced in all sorts of professions, these apostles of religion and civilisation changed by their energy the course of the River Fulda, and made it enter the monastery grounds, that they might have a sufficiency of water to practise the various arts of life, without being obliged to leave their enclosure. It is amazing with what rapidity the riches of the abbey increased under the government of St. Sturmius, its first superior. The economists of our days might well learn a lesson from these monks, who are so often accused of ignorance and sloth.

The four bishopries of Bavaria, founded by St. Boniface, offered, in gratitude towards and in memory of their founder, a gift each to the abbey of Fulda: before long it had fifteen thousand farms.[1] While the religious of Fulda were clearing the ground, studying science, and preparing new missionaries for the peoples of the North, St. Boniface, accompanied by a few zealous fellow-labourers, set out to preach the Gospel to the barbarous tribes that dwelt in the most remote parts of Friesland.

He converted a great many of them, and they received Baptism. The Eve of Pentecost was the day that he appointed to give Confirmation to the neophytes. As the church could not hold them all, he decided on administering this Sacrament in the open air He had some tents raised, and went to the meeting-place on the day appointed. While he was praying there, awaiting the arrival of the new Christians, a band of Pagans armed with swords and lances suddenly appeared, and came rushing on to the tents of the holy Bishop. His servants were preparing to offer the barbarians a vigorous resistance, when St. Boniface, hearing the noise, called

[1] Hélyot, t. V, p. 130

his Priests, and, taking the relics which he always carried about with him, went forth from his tent, and said to them,—My children, do not fight. The Scripture forbids us to return evil for evil. The day for which I have so long sighed is come. Let us hope in God. He will save our souls.

He then exhorted all his companions in general to meet courageously a passing death, which would bring them to everlasting life. His example strengthened them yet more than his advice. Scarcely had he ceased to speak, when the barbarians fell on him. He did not flinch, and the furies massacred him and all those who accompanied him, to the number of fifty-two. Thus did St. Boniface terminate by a glorious death a life which had been a continual martyrdom, since it had been spent in the fatigues of a continual apostleship. His great labours, and the fruits which the Church reaped from them, merited for him so precious a crown. The body of the Saint was carried to the abbey of Fulda, and God there glorified His servant by a great many miracles. His martyrdom occurred on the 5th of June, 755.

While the Spouse of Jesus Christ was receiving joyfully the numerous children that Boniface and his companions begot to the truth, at the cost of their sweat and their blood, she felt the utmost alarm when she turned her eyes towards the East. The Mahometans, also called Saracens, were gradually extending their conquests, that is to say, their ravages. Like the ancient Assyrians, they were the rod of the anger of God. By the directions of Providence, they forced their way whithersoever there was a solemn punishment to be inflicted.

In the beginning of the eighth century, Egypt and other parts along the coast of Africa, having been guilty of heresy, were made to writhe under the scourge of God. The Saracens took possession of these countries, lately so happy and flourishing. Heaps of ruins, the most painful slavery, at length barbarism: such was the cost, such is still the cost, of throwing off the yoke of Jesus Christ. Another crime soon called them to Europe. It was necessary to punish the rebellion of princes against their father a king, and scandalous immodesty seated on the throne of Spain. The Saracens passed over from Africa to this fair kingdom, and took possession of it: the blood of martyrs flowed in immense streams.

However, the Saracens, after the example of the Assyrians whom God had raised up to punish the Jews when they forsook the Law wanted to overstep their mission. They proposed to themselves the extermination of all Christian peoples. But that God who said to the sea, "Thus far shalt thou come, and here shalt thou break the pride of thy waves," knew how to raise a strong dike against the

torrent that threatened to lay all Europe waste. His Providence had prepared a people who have always been the protectors of the Church, a people who seem to have been chosen more particularly than any other to arrest the Ottoman power, since it was they that crushed it on the occasion of which we speak, and that, three centuries later, should give the signal for the Crusades. Let us say it to the glory of France, our beloved country: without her the Saracens would have subjugated Europe, and replunged it, perhaps for ever, into barbarism.

In 732, the Saracens of Spain, under the leadership of Abderame, invaded France on two sides at the same time. The right wing advanced along the Rhone and the Saone as far as the Yonne. They took Avignon, Viviers, Valence, Lyons, Macon, Chalons, Besancon, Dijon, and Auxerre. At Luxeuil, the Abbot Mellin was slain, together with his religious: this celebrated monastery remained fifteen years without an Abbot, and the singing of psalms ceased within its walls. At length, they laid siege to Sens; but the inhabitants, led on by their holy Bishop, made such a vigorous sortie that they were put to flight. Thus was their progress checked on one side. The left wing attacked Aquitaine. They took Oleron, Auch, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Perigueux, and lastly Poitiers, everywhere burning churches, everywhere spreading desolation and death. It was then that Charles Martel came to the rescue. After seven days passed in skirmishes, he met them in a great battle. Abderame was killed and his army cut to pieces. This famous battle, which rid the Saracens of any wish ever to return to France, occurred near Poitiers on a Saturday in the month of October, 732.[1]

Nevertheless, tepidity and scandal, too prevalent among Christians at this period, required a more striking atonement. Providence placed, as on all other occasions, an innocent victim by the side of crime. Thus is the divine wrath appeased. Thus are the affections of our hearts, defiled by the love of creatures, carried towards the only goods worthy of us. Among those victims of expiation, we must reckon all those pious cenobites, all those holy Bishops, then flourishing, and especially those glorious martyrs whose blood flowed under the sword of the Saracens. The most celebrated were the religious of Lerins.

Lerins is a little island in the Mediterranean, near the coast of France. There was a monastery here, remarkable for the sanctity and learning of its occupants. St. Porcarius, who was its Abbot, being informed by revelation of its approaching destruction, exhorted his disciples to die nobly for the Faith. He hid the relics

[1] Fleury, l. XLVII. Godescard, June 5.

of his church, and made the youngest of his religious, to the number of thirty-six, along with sixteen boys, who were being educated in the place as boarders, take shipping for Italy. The exhortations of Porcarius failing to fortify two of his religious, Eleutherius and Columbus, against the fear of death, they went and hid themselves in a cave on the shore. The others, encouraged by the example of their Abbot, and strengthened by communion and prayer, waited fearlessly for death.

The Saracens possessed themselves of the abbey, which they found undefended, and made prisoners of its five hundred religious. Singling out the oldest, they began to torture them, in order to terrify the others, to whom they also made great promises, on condition of embracing their religion; but there was not one that did not prefer to die rather than renounce his faith. Columbus, ashamed of his timidity, rejoined his brethren, and took part in their triumph over a cruel death. The Saracens left alive only five of the religious, who were strong and well made: these they put on board their captain's ship.

After pulling down the churches, and the buildings of the monastery, the infidels set sail, and at length cast anchor in the harbour of Agata in Provence. Here the four religious found means to escape from the ship and to reach a neighbouring forest. They walked all night and arrived at Arluc, a monastery of virgins, near Antibes, which was under the guidance of the Abbots of Lerins. At break of day, meeting with a boat, they set out again for Lerins, where they found the bodies of their murdered companions.

Hearing the cries to which this sad sight moved them, Eleutherius came forth from his cave and rejoined his brethren. When they had rendered the last duties to the dead, they went away to Italy, in order to search for those whom Porcarius had sent thither. They afterwards re-established their monastery, and chose Eleutherius to be their abbot.

The Lord, who was giving the crown of martyrdom to some of His servants, was surrounding others with a visible protection: equally good, equally adorable in His various counsels over the children of men! Defeated by Charles Martel, the Saracens again made great ravages on their return. They slew all the Christians that they met, and burned the monasteries and other holy places. St. Pardoux was then Abbot of Gueret, the chief town of Marche. The rumour spreading that the spoilers were drawing near the monastery, the venerable old man said calmly to his religious, "My children, if they come to the door of the house, give them something to eat and drink, for they must be tired." The religious, fearing for their days and for those of their holy abbot, got ready a covered

coach and brought it to him, in order to take him away safely in those lonely places; but the holy man declared to them that he should never leave the monastery with his life. All the religious fled, and the intrepid old man alone remained with a servant named Eufrasius, who hid himself to see what would happen.

Observing the approach of the enemy, he ran to say to the holy Abbot, Father, do not leave off praying; the enemy is near the door. The good old man fell prostrate, and said, Lord, disperse these people, and do not let them enter here this day! Arrived at the door, the infidels suddenly stopped, and, after speaking together a long time in their own language, turned aside and continued their journey.

The Church, delivered from the Saracens, soon found herself attacked by a more terrible enemy: infidels make martyrs, but heresy gives rise to apostasy. The East was again the cursed region that should send forth the new error. It was an error so much the more dangerous as it had a prince for its author. Emperors had already been seen protecting heresy: now an emperor was to be seen making himself the leader of a sect!

Leo the Isaurian had obtained the crown by his military qualities. Born in the camp and brought up to the profession of arms, he was a man exceedingly ignorant; yet he had the vanity and folly to set himself up as a reformer. He had let himself be persuaded by the Mussulmans and by an apostate Christian that the worship rendered to the images of Our Lord and the Saints was idolatrous. In the tenth year of his reign, he issued an edict commanding the removal from churches of all images of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints. This attempt, so much opposed to the invariable and universal practice of the Church, disgusted the whole world. The people of Constantinople complained loudly of it, and St. Germanus, the Patriarch of this city, stood out manfully against the execution of the edict.

He first tried to undeceive the emperor by private conversations. He told him that the worship which is rendered to holy images is referred to those whom they represent, as a prince is honoured in his portrait; that this relative worship had always been rendered to the images of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin; and that it was rash and impious to attack such an old tradition.

But the emperor, who did not know the elements of the Christian doctrine, remained obstinate in his error. The Patriarch then informed Pope St. Gregory II. of what was occurring at Constantinople. The emperor, on his side, sent his edict to Rome, in order to have it executed. The Sovereign Pontiff answered the Patriarch, congratulating him on his courage in grappling with the

rising heresy, and held an assembly of Bishops, in which it was condemned. He also wrote to the emperor, warning him that it belongs to Bishops, and not to kings, to judge of the things of Religion.

These wise remonstrances were ill received by the emperor, who only became more eager for the execution of his edict. He caused images to be burned in the public squares, and the beautifully painted walls of churches to be whitewashed. He ordered a large crucifix, which Constantine had placed over the door of the imperial palace after his victory, to be knocked down with an axe. The officer, who received this commission, lost his life in the attempt. The provoked emperor tyrannised over his people, banished the holy Patriarch Germanus, and put to death some of the most ardent defenders of holy images.

All this being useless, he tried to win over to his party the literary men who had charge of the imperial library. Unable to influence them either by promises or threats, he shut them up in the library, and surrounded it with dry wood and all other sorts of combustible materials at hand. He then set the place on fire. Numberless medals and pictures, and more than thirty thousand volumes, were consumed by the pitiless flames. The barbarous emperor was excommunicated by the Sovereign Pontiffs, Gregory II. and Gregory III. Wishing to have revenge, he fitted out a fleet and sent it off to Italy, but it was wrecked in the Adriatic, and the tyrant died a little while afterwards, in 741, regarded as a scourge to religion and humanity.

His son Constantine Copronymus succeeded him. He surpassed his father in rage against the images of the Saints and against those who honoured them. By his orders, the eyes of Catholics were plucked out and their nostrils slit; they were torn with scourges too, and cast into the sea. This impious prince had a special hatred of religious: there were no outrages or tortures that he did not make them suffer. From a refined cruelty, he caused their beards to be overlaid with inflammable matter and then lighted, and the painted wooden images of the Saints to be broken on their heads. All these horrors were amusements to Constantine, who delighted in presiding at executions, and in beholding streams of fresh warm blood. He had a tribunal raised at the gates of Constantinople, and there, surrounded by his servants, amid imperial pomp, the New Nero tortured Catholics, and feasted his eyes on their sufferings.

In those days there lived near Nicomedia a holy Abbot named Stephen, whose virtue was much revered by all the people. The emperor, wishing to gain him to his party, had him brought to Con-

stantinople, and took on himself the task of interrogating him, so confident was he that he should be able to embarrass him by his arguments; for this prince imagined himself no tyro in dialectics. He began, therefore, to dispute with the venerable old religious. O stupid man! said the emperor to him, how do you fail to see that we may trample underfoot the image of Jesus Christ without offending Jesus Christ Himself?

Without another word Stephen drew near the prince, and, showing him a piece of money that bore his image, said to him, I may therefore treat this image in the same manner without failing in the respect that I owe you. Then, throwing the piece of money on the ground, he tramped on it. Immediately the courtiers made a rush at the holy man, in order to give him some rough usage Well, well! said Stephen, heaving a deep sigh, it is a crime deserving of punishment to insult the image of a prince of the earth, and is it no harm to trample under foot the image of the King of Heaven? There was no reasonable answer to be returned, but his fate was settled: he was dragged away to prison, and shortly afterwards he expired under tortures.

The persecution spread through the greater part of the empire, and nearly every important city counted many martyrs. This war on the worship of the Saints is worthy of remark: it shows that there is not one of our dogmas that has not been sealed with blood. What surer testimony of the truth?

Meanwhile, the hand of God fell heavy on the tyrant. He too should serve as a witness to the divinity of Christianity, by becoming a monument to the justice of that God whom he had outraged. As he was marching against the Bulgarians, he suddenly felt his legs breaking out into a mass of ulcers and sores. This was followed by a fever and pains so acute that they almost deprived him of reason. Nothing was left but to picture to himself in despair the approaching judgment of God. He was placed on board a ship to be conveyed to Constantinople; but he died before arriving there—on the 1st of September, 775, crying out that he was burning alive, and that he already felt the infernal flames, in punishment of the blasphemies that he had not been afraid to utter against the Mother of God. Such was the end of this emperor: a terrible end, well calculated to restrain princes who would think of walking in his footsteps!

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having consoled Thy Church by calling to the Faith new peoples, that they might fill up the places of those whom heresy had taken away. Do not

permit us ever to abuse Thy graces, lest we should see them transferred to others.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will have a great respect for holy images.*

LESSON XXXII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES.)

The Church consoled and defended: St. John Damascene; Second General Council of Nice. The Church propagated: Conversion of Denmark and Sweden; St. Anscharius. The Church attacked in Spain: by the Saracens. The Church defended by her Martyrs: St. Eulogius. The Church propagated: Conversion of the Bulgarians.

To suffer persecution on earth has been the destiny of truth from the time of original sin: in all ages its preachers are objects of hatred. We have not forgotten what it cost the Prophets to announce it to the Jews. The Son of God, the Living Truth, should have poured out on His person all the hatred of degraded man; and He was a Man of Sorrows. The Apostles shared the same fate. And the Divine Spouse of the Man-God, the Catholic Church, will bear for ever on her brow a crown of thorns. But if, on the one hand, truth is continually meeting with attacks, on the other, it is always defended; so that, in this everlasting warfare, victory falls to it, and must fall to it: this is what the foregoing lessons have shown us. The same spectacle will be presented to us in succeeding ages, and it will always be true to say that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church.

When, therefore, the Emperors Leo and Constantine, those two crowned heresiarchs, attacked in the most violent manner the worship of holy images, God raised up defenders of the truth. Such were St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, and the holy Popes Gregory II. and Gregory III. But in the foremost rank appeared an illustrious Father of the Church, whose mighty voice resounded through the whole world, and shook the edifice of error to its foundations.

This man, raised up by God for the defence of our worship, was St. John, surnamed Damascene, because he was born at Damascus, the capital of Cœlosyria. He came of a noble and ancient family. His father, though most zealous for the interests of Christianity, was highly esteemed among the Saracens, who had become masters

of Palestine and Syria. His birth, his talents, his probity, induced the Mussulman emperors to confer on him the first dignities of the court. Appointed secretary of state, the pious minister redoubled his fervour, and watched over himself the more as he saw the dangers that surrounded his faith. He took particular care of the education of his son, whose innocence ran the greatest risk in the court of infidel princes.

God, who never lets the merits of His servants pass unrewarded, came to the aid of this virtuous father: a work of charity obtained for him a preceptor worthy of his son. Among the captives whom this pious minister had ransomed, there was one named Cosmas: he was a religious, as remarkable for his virtue as for his learning. He gladly undertook the education of his benefactor's son, and left no means untried to correspond with the confidence that had been placed in him. Thanks to the enlightened solicitude of the master and the excellent dispositions of the pupil, John became a man no less intelligent than pious. Honoured like his father among the Saracens, he was appointed governor of Damascus. His high-mindedness and general capacity were so well known, that—a very rare thing!—he enjoyed the favour of the prince without making anyone jealous: the result of which was many great advantages for Religion.

However, the Saint could not remove his fears about the dangers that met his eyes on all sides. Convinced that it is very hard to remain virtuous in the midst of plenty, in the midst of pleasure, he resolved to give up his position and to quit the world. Having distributed his goods to the poor and to churches, he retired privately to the Laura of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem. He addressed himself to the superior, who committed him to the care of an old religious, very experienced in the direction of souls. Under such a master, the fervent novice advanced with great strides in the way of perfection. His guide put him daily to a thousand different tests, in order to bring him to a consummate obedience.

One day he ordered him to go and sell some baskets in Damascus, and at the same time forbade him to give them under a certain price, which was quite exorbitant. What do you think of this? Would not such a trial seem to you rather severe? Well, humble as a child, the Saint obeyed without the least murmur. Clad as a poor man, he went off to Damascus, where he had formerly lived in splendour. When he exposed his baskets for sale, he answered those who asked their price in accordance with what his master had commanded him. His ideas were treated as extravagant, and he was laden with insults: all of which he bore silently. At length, an old servant of his, happening to pass the way, took pity on him,

and bought all the baskets at the price for which he wanted to sell them. It was thus that he triumphed over vanity, a passion against which his director endeavoured by every possible means to put him on his guard.

Our Saint, raised to the priesthood, and having nothing to dread from that secret vanity which often robs even the Christian author of all the merit of his watches and his toils, received a command to take up his pen in defence of the Faith, attacked by the Iconoclasts. He wrote therefore his three celebrated *Discourses on Images*. In the first he sets out with this principle, that the Church, being infallible, it is impossible that she should ever fall into idolatry. He refutes the objections of heretics, to whom he puts this question: Why do you refuse to honour images, when you honour the hill of Calvary, the rock of the Holy Sepulchre, the Book of the Gospels, the Cross, and sacred vessels? In the second, the holy apologist demonstrates that no regard is to be paid to the imperial edicts on the question of images. In the third, he brings forward a great many passages from the Fathers in favour of the Catholic doctrine.

A missionary and an apologist, this great man was not content with writing against the Iconoclasts: he travelled through all parts of Palestine in order to encourage the persecuted Faithful. For the same purpose, he went to Constantinople, without being terrified by the power of the Emperor Constantine Copronymus, an ardent supporter of heresy. Returning to his cell, he died about the year 780, and went to receive in Heaven the reward of his humility and his zeal for the defence of the Church.[1]

The voice of St. John Damascene, joined with the demands of all Catholics, was heard. The Empress Irene, having become regent of the empire, made haste to write to Pope Adrian regarding the convocation of a Council in which heresy and its partisans

[1] See Fleury, l. LXIII; D. Cellier, t. XVII, p. 110, and Godescard May 6. The chief works of St. John Damascene are:—

1. His *Discourses on Images*.

2. The *Book of the Orthodox Faith*. All Catholic truths are so linked together therein that it forms a complete course of theology.

3. The *Book of the Capital Vices*. After showing in what they consist, the Saint gives the means of resisting and destroying them.

4. The *Book of Dialectics*. This work has made St. John Damascene be regarded as the inventor of the method which has since been adopted in theological schools, and which St. Anselm introduced among the Latins. A famous Protestant minister, named Cave, refuses to term any man judicious who does not admire in the writings of St. John Damascene a profound erudition, great clearness and correctness of ideas, and uncommon strength of argument.

P. Lequien, a Dominican, has left us a good edition of the works of St John Damascene: 2 vols., folio, 1712

should be condemned. The Sovereign Pontiff approved of this design. The Bishops of the various provinces of the empire assembled, to the number of three hundred and seventy, at Nice, a city already celebrated as having had the first œcumenical council held in it. The objections of the Iconoclasts or Image-Breakers were refuted; their heresy, confounded and silenced. At length, the Fathers, having respectfully declared that they received the preceding councils, pronounced their judgment in these terms:—

"We decide that images may be exhibited not only in churches, on sacred vessels, on ornaments, on walls, but also in houses and by the wayside; for the more anyone beholds in those images Our Lord Jesus Christ, His Mother, the Apostles, and the Saints, the more he feels inclined to remember and honour their models. It is right to salute and respect those images, but the worship of latria, which pertains to the divine nature alone, must not be given them. Those images may be approached with incense and lights, as is done in regard to the Cross, the Gospel, and other sacred things, because the honour rendered to the image is referred to the object which it represents. Such is the doctrine of the Fathers and the Catholic Church."

Anathema was then pronounced against the Iconoclasts. This decree was signed by the Legates of the Holy Father and by all the Bishops. So ended this savage heresy. Why should the pretended reformers of the sixteenth century, walking in the footsteps of those ancient fanatics, have renewed it with the same excesses of impiety, the same blind fury?

From the eighth century let us now pass on to the ninth, and prepare ourselves for new sentiments of admiration and gratitude in regard to that Providence which watches over the Church.

Open persecutors or weak defenders of Religion, the emperors of Constantinople saw the crown of the West pass to a worthier head. Charlemagne, the most powerful of our kings, was consecrated emperor of the West, at Rome, on Christmas Day, in the year 800. He never ceased to protect the Church during a long and glorious reign. Studies were revived, the sciences were held in honour, and schools were founded in connection with the cathedrals and the great abbeys of the kingdom. While Religion was flourishing in the vast empire of Charlemagne, he did everything in his power to enable the Gospel to pass beyond its limits. For a long time the Saxons had been making inroads on his territory. To give them a check, he undertook against them a war which ended in their conversion. They held out for a considerable time; but at length they embraced the Christian Religion, and Charlemagne

required nothing more from them in atonement for their frequent revolts.

The conversion of the Saxons was followed by that of many other Northern peoples. Thus did the Church repair the losses which she had sustained from Mahometanism and heresy in the East and South: it may even be said that she indemnified herself beforehand for those which she should soon again sustain.

St. Anscharius carried the Gospel into Denmark and Sweden. How much glory did these two kingdoms render to the Benedictines! To them they were indebted for the blessings of Faith and civilisation. St. Anscharius, their apostle, was a monk of the abbey of Corbie, in Picardy. Harold, Prince of Denmark, having received Baptism at the court of Louis Le Debonnaire, asked for some zealous missionaries to accompany him to his own country. He received our Saint, who sighed after nothing but the spread of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Anscharius laboured successfully for the conversion of the idolators. To purchase young slaves, to bring them up in the knowledge of the true God, and to make of them so many domestic missionaries, was the most effectual means that he found to perpetuate the fruit of his preachings: thus did he form in Denmark a very numerous school.

While this mission was prospering, the King of Sweden begged Louis le Debonnaire to send him some apostles to preach the Gospel in his states. The French Emperor, delighted at the request, asked the Abbot of Corbie if any of his religious would like to go to Sweden. Anscharius was just then at Corbie, whither the wants of his mission had called him. He was brought to the court, and, being presented to the Emperor, accepted the commission. Another religious of Corbie joined him.

The Emperor gave the two missionaries some presents for the King of Sweden, and they embarked for their new mission; but they were attacked on their way by pirates, who carried off the presents. Instead of returning, as some persons advised, Anscharius, committing all to Providence, pushed on. He and his companion made a very long journey on foot, amid many great difficulties. From time to time they had to cross arms of the sea in very small boats, floating about at the pleasure of Him who commands the winds and the waves. At length they reached Sweden, bearing nothing with them but the good tidings of salvation. Yet they were well received by the king. The men of God put their hands to the work as soon as possible, and great success crowned their labours.

The governor of the principal city was one of the first that grace converted. This nobleman, who was very much beloved by the

king, built a church, gave many other proofs of a sincere piety, and persevered steadfastly in the faith that he had embraced. When the number of Christians became large, Hamburg was formed into an archiepiscopal see, of which Anscharius was the first to bear the title. The holy Archbishop cultivated this field with untiring care. In spite of all his labours, he led a most austere life, supporting himself on bread and water alone. His charity towards the poor knew no bounds, and his greatest pleasure was to wash their feet and serve them at table. God granted him the gift of miracles. By his virtue and his prayers he cured many sick persons, but his humility prevented him from attributing these cures to himself.

The holy Apostle had always hoped that he should shed his blood for the Faith. When he saw himself attacked by the illness of which he died, he was inconsolable at not having this happiness. Alas! he would say, it is my sins that have deprived me of the grace of martyrdom. Feeling his last hour approach, he summoned up all the strength that remained to him, and exhorted his disciples to serve God faithfully and to continue his dear mission. He died in the sixty-seventh year of his age.'

While the barbarism of the peoples of the North was yielding to the zeal of missionaries, the fanaticism of Mussulmans was overcome in Spain by the courage of martyrs. The Saracens, having made themselves masters of the greater part of this beautiful country, tried every means in their power to destroy the Faith. The Christians had to endure the most violent persecutions. A multitude poured out their blood in defence of their religion: among the number were St. Perfectus, St. Columbus, and St. Eulogius. The last-named belonged to one of the chief families in Cordova. He spent the first years of his youth with the clerics of the Church of this city. His virtue and learning caused him to be raised to the priesthood, and afterwards placed at the head of the ecclesiastical school at Cordova, which was then most celebrated. The enlightened director sanctified his studies by prayer, fasting, and watching. His humility, meekness, and charity gained for him the friendship and veneration of all that knew him. He used often to visit the monasteries, in order to form himself to perfection under the accomplished models that were to be found there.

In the meantime, the Moorish king, Abderame III., kindled a violent persecution against the Christians. The Bishop of Cordova was cast into prison, with a great many of his Priests and the Faithful. Among the former was Eulogius, whose only crime consisted in encouraging the Martyrs by his instructions.

Godescard, Feb. 3: Fleury, l. I. p. 1 *et suiv.*; *Abrégé de l'Eglise*, p. 260

This holy man employed all the time that he spent in chains in composing his *Exhortation to Martyrs*. It is addressed to two virgins, named Flora and Mary, who were beheaded the following year. Eulogius and his companions were released six days after the martyrdom of these two saints, rightly attributing the favour of their liberty to the prayers which Flora and Mary had promised to make for them in Heaven.

The Archbishop of Toledo having died, Eulogius was unanimously elected to succeed him; but he survived his election only for a short time. The fire of persecution having been rekindled under Mahomet, the successor of Abderame, he was again arrested, and suffered that martyrdom to which he had exhorted so many other Christians. The occasion of his death was this:—

A virgin, named Leocritia, of distinguished family among the Mussulmans, had been instructed from her childhood in Christianity by a relative of hers, who had even got her baptised. Her father and mother, knowing this, ill-treated her day and night, in order to make her renounce the Faith. But, firm as we ourselves should be when there is question of fulfilling the duties of a Christian, she was content with replying meekly that God must be obeyed rather than men. However, she acquainted the Priest Eulogius and his sister Ancelona with her condition, and told them that she wished to retire to some place where she might be free to practise her religion. Eulogius pointed out to her secretly the means of quitting the paternal roof, and kept her for some time concealed in the houses of friends whose fidelity was proof against every trial. The father and mother, in despair at having let their daughter escape, did everything in their power to find her out: they succeeded after a great search.

Eulogius was arrested and brought with Leocritia before the "cadi," or judge, who asked the Saint why he had turned aside a daughter from the obedience which she owed her parents. Eulogius showed him that there are cases when disobedience to parents is a duty: he offered even to teach him the way to Heaven, and to demonstrate for him that Mahomet was an impostor. The judge, provoked by these words, threatened to have him scourged to death. Your torments are useless, replied Eulogius: I will never change my religion. Hereupon the judge ordered him to be taken to the palace, that he might be presented before the king's council.

One of the councillors, taking him apart, said to him, If ignorant people run blindly to death, well and good; but a wise and intelligent man like you ought not to imitate their folly. Take my advice, yield to necessity. There is only a word required from you. You will then be at liberty to resume your religion, and we will

promise never more to disturb you.—Ah, said Eulogius, if you had the least idea of the rewards promised to Christians you would gladly renounce all temporal advantages in order to gain them.—Immediately he began to prove to the council the truth of Christianity; but he would not be listened to, and was condemned to lose his head. While being led to the place of execution, a servant gave him a blow on the cheek for having spoken against Mahomet. The Saint turned the other cheek, and patiently received a second. He joyfully completed his martyrdom, and Leocritia was beheaded four days afterwards. The Christians carried off their bodies, and gave them an honourable burial.

The blood of the martyrs, which was flowing in Spain, became, as it becomes in all ages, a seed of new Christians. On the Asiatic side of Europe dwelt the Bulgarians, a powerful and ferocious nation: behold how Religion comes to tame these lions, and to make them all gentleness and innocence!

In a war that they had to maintain against Theophilus, the Emperor of the East, the Bulgarians lost a great battle. Among the captives was found the sister of their king. This princess was taken to Constantinople, where she remained for thirty-eight years. During this long interval she acquired a knowledge of the Christian Religion and received Baptism. At length set free, she returned to her brother the king in Bulgaria. She was continually speaking to him of the Christian Religion, and exhorting him to embrace it. Her words moved the king, and Heaven seemed to act in concert with the pious princess. A dangerous epidemic sweeping over Bulgaria, the king had recourse to the God of his sister, as formerly Clovis had to the God of Clotilda, and the evil ceased almost instantly. After this prodigy, the king was convinced; but the fear of stirring up his subjects, who were very much attached to their superstitions, still held him in fetters.

Matters were in this state when St. Cyril, who was preaching the Gospel in the adjoining nations, received an order to enter Bulgaria. The king at first resisted the discourses of the missionary, as he had resisted the conversations of his sister. At last the moment of grace came. The king, wishing to have a gallery in his palace decorated, asked an experienced painter from the Emperor of Constantinople. A holy monk, who excelled in painting, was sent to him: he was Methodius, the brother of Cyril. Scarcely had he arrived when Bogoris—this was the name of the Bulgarian king—asked him among other things to choose out a subject that would freeze the spectators with fear. The painter represented the Last Judgment with all its awful circumstances.

The work finished, Methodius suddenly lifted the veil in presence

of the king. The sight, and yet more the explanation, of the picture, terrified the monarch. He could no longer hold back, and, corresponding to that grace which spoke to him by a sensible object, he asked to be instructed in the Christian Religion. Methodius laboured speedily to enlighten his doubts, and to give him all the knowledge of which he might have need: he was baptised during the night, and received the name of Michael. Notwithstanding the precautions that were taken to keep the affair secret, the report of it soon spread. The Bulgarians rebelled, and marched to attack the palace. Michael, full of confidence in God, put himself at the head of his guards, and scattered the rebels. The excitement did not last long: minds began to cool; the people laid aside their prejudices gradually, listened to the preachers of the Gospel, and received Baptism after the example of their king.

Michael now sent ambassadors to the Sovereign Pontiff, as to the Head of the Church, to ask him for some evangelical labourers, and to consult him on several questions connected with religion and morals. Pope Nicholas I. looked with tender emotion on these new Christians, who had come so far to receive the instructions of the Holy See. After giving them a most affectionate welcome, the Common Father of the Faithful answered in detail their inquiries, and sent them back full of joy, accompanied by two Bishops of singular wisdom and virtue.

Nothing could be more edifying than the behaviour of these newly converted peoples. To the ferocity, the gross, infamous, cruel superstitions, the abominable vices, that used to reign among the Bulgarians, had succeeded meekness, concord, purity of morals, all that contributes to the happiness and glory of a nation. Michael himself, the first Christian king of Bulgaria, abdicated the crown to go and end his days in a monastery. What religion but the Christian, what missionaries but the Catholic, have ever civilised peoples, or wrought such miracles?

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having manifested the power of Thy grace, by converting so many idolatrous nations. Convert also sinners, who do not love Thee, and heretics, who do not know Thee aright.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will employ my talents for the glory of God.*

LESSON XXXIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES.)

The Church attacked: Schism of Photius. The Church defended: General Council of Constantinople. The Church propagated: Conversion of the Russians and Normans. The Church afflicted by Great Scandals. The Church consoled by Great Virtues: Victims of Expiation; Foundation of the celebrated Abbey of Cluny.

While the Church was labouring with so much zeal and success to procure for the peoples of the North the blessings of the Gospel, with civilisation and all the advantages thereof, the devil was endeavouring to draw back the nations of the East into error and slavery. He succeeded only too well. The time was approaching when this East, continually disputing about the Faith, continually bringing forth new heresies, should lose—alas! perhaps for ever—the precious light of Catholic truth, which it did not know how to value. In the same manner as the Jewish people, an image of the Church, had seen its tribes divided by a deplorable schism, the Catholic Church should see accomplished in herself this dreadful figure. The East should separate from the West, and tear the seamless robe of the Spouse of Jesus Christ, a nuptial robe adorned with various colours, symbolic of the many peoples whom she should unite into one.

The chief author of this fatal schism was Photius. He was a man of great influence at the court of the Emperors of Constantinople. By his impostures and intrigues he obtained the banishment of St. Ignatius, the Patriarch of this city. He possessed himself of the see, and carried his audacity so far as to write to Pope Nicholas I., asking him to confirm his election. The wicked knave forgot nothing that might make a favourable impression on the Sovereign Pontiff. By his account it was against his will that he had been chosen for his eminent position; he had resisted with all his strength; violence had been done him. It was only after shedding a torrent of tears, he added, that he had at length consented to receive the imposition of hands. Ignatius, he concluded, had freely and willingly retired into a monastery, there to end his days in honourable repose: infirmities and old age had made him decide on taking this step.

All this time Ignatius was shut up in a loathsome prison, where he was treated very badly. The Pope, who had not received

any information of this from Ignatius, because his enemies would not let him write, acted very cautiously, and would make no decision on the election of Photius without a mature examination. At length the truth came to light. Ignatius found means to acquaint the Head of the Church with all that had occurred at Constantinople. The Pope declared the nomination of Photius null, pronounced Ignatius the only lawful Patriarch, and communicated all his sentiments on the usurpation to the Emperor. Photius, offended, set no bounds to his fury. He attacked the Roman Church, and reproached it with several points of discipline that he had himself previously regarded as blameless. The deceitful words of the wretch poisoned the minds of his followers. His conduct was like a hidden seed, which, after germinating by slow degrees, at last broke out in that deplorable schism which still exists, and for which the Greeks have paid so dear.

To put an end to so much scandal, the Emperor assembled in his palace the Bishops who happened to be at Constantinople. By their advice, he drove Photius from the patriarchal see, and shut him up in a monastery. Immediately after the expulsion of the intruder, Ignatius returned solemnly to his Church. The holy Pontiff, wishing to repair the evils that it had suffered, engaged the Prince to convoke a General Council.

The Emperor commissioned deputies to wait on the Pope, and to beg him to send his legates thereto. At the same time he wrote to all the Bishops of the empire. The Council opened at Constantinople in the year 869. It consisted of two hundred Bishops, and was the eighth General Council. Therein was recognised the primacy of the Roman Church, and two letters were written—one to the Sovereign Pontiff, praying him to confirm, by his authority, the decrees of the Council, and to make them be received by all the Churches of the West; the other to all the Faithful, exhorting them to submission.[1]

Thus was closed the deep wound that the ambitious Photius had made on the Church. It was not the first time that the Divine Spouse of Jesus Christ had been an object of attack for schism and heresy; but the rage of hell can never prevail against her. The axes of the Neros and the Diocletians did not prevent the establishment of the Church; sophism and heresy cannot destroy it. It has triumphed over all the sects of the past, and has thereby given a pledge of its future triumphs When we say that the Church has triumphed over all heresies, you must understand that heresy has never been able to deprive it of one of the truths

[1] See Fleury, l. LI LIII.

deposited with it. The proof is evident: its Symbol is the same to-day as formerly—not an iota more or less!

Add that the great characteristics which ought to gain it recognition throughout the whole world as undoubtedly the work of God, shine to-day with as much splendour as formerly. A few words will suffice to make this plain.

Whatever the progress of heresy may have been, the Church has never ceased to be *Catholic*, or Universal. We have often made the remark: what it loses on one side it always gains on another. It has never ceased to be *Apostolical*, that is to say, it reaches back by a visible and uninterrupted succession of pastors to St. Peter, whom Jesus Christ Himself appointed Chief of the Apostles. On the contrary, every sect fails in this line of ministers, and goes no further back than its author, who was himself brought up in the Church before forming a party aside. This separation cannot be glossed over: its epoch remains well known. The Pagans themselves used to regard the Roman Church as the root from which all other societies came forth, as the ever-living trunk from which the separated branches fell. Hence they were thoughtful enough to call it by its true name, its incommunicable name—the *Great Church*, the *Catholic Church*. On the contrary, heretics retain the name of their authors as a proof of their novelty and a seal of their ignominy.

Victorious over persecutions and heresies, the Church has been the same over scandals: this is the third test. As we have already seen, and as we shall soon see again, with a greater force of evidence, the Church has triumphed over scandals, that is to say, its morality has not ceased to be holy: it has not ceased to forbid evil, no matter of what kind—to forbid evil even in its ministers; it condemned formerly what it condemns to-day; it continually makes great saints who stand as barriers against the torrents of iniquity, and whose authentic miracles are in all ages an assurance of unchangeable sanctity.[1]

Let us now return to the conquests of the Church. While it was bewailing the scandalous intrusion of Photius into the see of Constantinople, it met on the Northern side with much matter of consolation. There had lately appeared on the banks of the Dnieper, in the most northerly part of Europe, a ferocious and wicked nation, plunged in the thickest darkness of idolatry: we allude to the Russians. They lived scattered about in woods and on plains, and often changed their place of dwelling, like the Tartars of the present day.[2]

[1] See *Hist. abr. de l'Eglise*, p. 176.

[2] Such is the meaning of the word *Russian*.

To mollify their fierce temper and to keep them from rushing down on his provinces, the Emperor Basil sent them some presents. Along with the ambassadors went a holy Bishop, commissioned by St. Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who had just been reinstated in his see. Yes, indeed, the true way to civilise savage, barbarous peoples is to send them Bishops!

When the holy Missionary arrived among them, he wrought a miracle that made his instructions fruitful. The Prince of the Russians assembled the people to deliberate whether they ought to quit their ancient religion. Seating himself in the midst of the old men who formed his council, and who were most attached to idolatry, he allowed the Bishop to appear before them, and asked him what he was come to teach. The Missionary showed them the Book of the Gospels, and related many miracles to them from the New as well as from the Old Testament. That of the three children preserved in the fiery furnace made the deepest impression on the assembly. If you let us see some such wonder, said the old men, we will believe that you teach us the truth. It is not permitted to tempt God, replied the Bishop; however, if you are resolved to acknowledge His power, ask what you choose, and it will be granted to you, though we are unworthy of this favour.

The Russians asked that the book which he held in his hand should be thrown into a fire lighted by themselves, and promised that if it were not burned, they would become Christians. Then the Bishop, raising his eyes and hands to Heaven, made this prayer: "O Lord Jesus! glorify Thy name in presence of all these people." The Book of the Gospels was thrown into a blazing furnace. It was left there for a long time. At length the fire was extinguished, and the Book was found whole, without so much as the cover or the clasps being injured.

At the sight of this miracle, the astonished barbarians asked for Baptism and received it eagerly.[1] God has renewed from age to age, He still renews in our own days, the miracles that made the establishment of Christianity remarkable. His arm is not shortened; and, when He sends Missionaries to a new people, He works in their favour the same prodigies that accompanied the preaching of the Apostles.[2] The conversion of the Russians happened in the year 851: this glorious conquest closes the ninth century.

The tenth presents us with another no less admirable, no less proper to show us that, in those ages termed barbarous, the Church was full of life and vigour: she did not cease to civilise the world, or to give her Divine Spouse numberless children.

[1] Fleury, l. LII. [2] *Hist. abr. de l'Eglise*, p. 267.

For a century the Normans had been ravaging the fairest provinces of Europe. The Normans, that is to say, *Northmen*, were barbarians who used to set out from Denmark, Norway, and the adjoining regions, in a great many small vessels with sails and oars, in order to make slaves and booty wherever they could. They had already entered France by the Seine and the Loire. They had plundered Rouen and Nantes, burned a great many monasteries, laid waste immense traćes of country, and, at the close of these expeditions, regained their vessels, carrying away large heaps of spoils. Nearly every year brought new fleets of these barbarians, whom it was impossible to resist. The alarm was general.

In 859, they returned more numerous than ever, entered the Rhine, laid waste the neighbouring provinces, and pillaged the city and suburbs of Amiens, where they put all that was left to fire and sword. Others, having made their way round Spain, entered France by the Rhone, and advanced as far as Valence, sacking every place that they visited. Thence they penetrated into Italy, whose cities met the same fate Germany and England were covered with ruins made by them. Two years later on they established themselves permanently near the mouth of the Seine. It was thence that they came to Paris, some of whose buildings they set on fire.

It belonged to the Christian Religion to take away this scourge, which had so long afflicted Europe, by humanising these wild and remorseless pirates. King Charles the Simple decided on treating with Rollo, the bravest of their chiefs. He sent to him the Archbishop of Rouen, who said to him, "Great prince! do you wish to make war all your life? Do you never think that you are a mortal, and that there is a God who will judge you after your death? If you are willing to become a Christian, King Charles will surrender to you all this side of the sea, and will give you his daughter in marriage." Rollo consulted the leaders of the Normans: the proposal was accepted and the treaty concluded. The king yielded to Rollo all the country since called Normandy, and gave him his daughter in marriage. Rollo, on his part, engaged to become a Christian, and to live in peace with the French. The Archbishop of Rouen instructed him in the mysteries of the Faith, and baptised him in the beginning of the year 912.

This conversion, which seemed a good deal owing to political motives, was nevertheless most sincere, as the issue proved. The offer made to Rollo was only an occasion brought about by Providence to lead this prince and his people to the Faith. In effect, the new Duke, after his baptism, prevailed on his counts, his knights, and all his army, to be instructed and baptised. He then asked the

Archbishop which were the churches most venerated in his new province. The Prelate mentioned the churches of Our Lady of Rouen, of Bayeux, and of Evreux, and those of Mount St. Michael, of St. Peter of Rouen, and of Jumiege. And in the neighbouring provinces, said Rollo, what Saint is esteemed the most powerful? St. Denis, replied the Archbishop.

Well, resumed the Prince, before dividing my lands among the nobles of my army, I wish to give a portion to God, to Holy Mary, and to those other Saints, in order to gain their protection. Accordingly, during the first week after his baptism, while still wearing the white robe, he daily gave an estate to each of those seven churches, in the order in which they had been named to him.

The eighth day, having laid aside his baptismal garments, he divided the lands among his officers. Then, with great pomp, he espoused the daughter of the King of France. Rollo seemed as amiable and religious after his conversion as he had previously seemed terrible. No one could have imagined that this great captain would ever show himself such a wise legislator. He spent the rest of his life in establishing good laws; and, as the Normans had hitherto been accustomed to pillage, he made some very severe ones against theft. They were so strictly observed, that no person durst even lift what he found lying on a road.

Let us mention a remarkable incident. The Duke had one day hung up a bracelet of his on a branch of an oak, under which he was resting himself during part of a hunt, and had forgotten it. There the bracelet remained for three years without any person's daring to take it away, so fully were all convinced that nothing could escape the searching severity of Rollo.

His very name inspired so much fear that it was enough to invoke it, when one suffered any violence, in order to oblige all those who heard the cry to pursue the wrong-doer. Such was the change wrought in the manners of the Normans.

And now, ye who hesitate in the choice of a religion, learn a lesson!

Do you know any sect, any party, any school of philosophers, that ever tamed and humanised a people so fierce and warlike as the Normans? No, the miracle of their conversion, like that of all other barbarous peoples, redounds to the glory of the Catholic Church alone. But the Catholic Church civilises nations only because her doctrine is good; this doctrine is good only because it is true, and it is true only because it is divine. If you can *justly* apply this argument to any sect, I am content: become sectaries! But if you cannot, and if, as you say, you seek the truth sincerely, what reso-

lution have you to make? Ask your judgment: it will at once tell you.

Hail, true Spouse of the Man-God! Heiress of the words of life! thou alone hast sufficient strength, not only to heal the wounds that thou hast received from barbarians, but also to change these new persecutors into docile and respectful children. Ye Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, and Normans, savage nations that overthrew the Roman Empire, far from destroying the Church, ye became her noble conquest. The mild Daughter of Heaven triumphed over your ignorance and your barbarity, as she had triumphed over the rage of executioners and the craft of heretics. This was her glory; it was also your happiness. May your gratitude be as lasting as her benefits!

Quiet in regard to the barbarians whom she had converted and the heretics whom she had crushed, it would seem that the Church might be left to the peaceful enjoyment of her difficult triumph. But it cannot be so. Like ourselves, our mother was born for warfare: the dethroned spirit seeks continually to recover his sceptre. The Church had therefore to fight against a new enemy: scandal.

The invasions of barbarians, the false maxims of heretics, the incessant wars that had laid Europe waste, brought along with them tepidity and disorder. The evil had penetrated even into the sanctuary, and into religious houses. The children of the Church, instead of being the consolation of their mother, broke her heart with crimes that covered themselves with shame. Let hell rejoice! But its triumph will not continue long. That God who is the Protector of Religion, will never abandon it: the victory is sure.

Behold how Providence is about to raise up illustrious saints, who will set themselves as an insurmountable barrier against the torrent of iniquity. In France, in Germany, in England, in Italy, the ecclesiastical and monastical orders will resume their early sanctity, and Christian peoples will become worthy of the name which they bear, and new centuries of glory will shine on the Church.

The Order of St. Benedict, which, during four hundred years, had covered Europe with its establishments and its benefits, had considerably degenerated from its first fervour. The honour of being its reformer was reserved for St. Odo, Abbot of Cluny. This celebrated abbey, situated in the neighbourhood of Macon, was founded, in 910, by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine, moved thereto by the following circumstance.

Some of his officers, having passed by the monastery of Baume,[1]

[1] Near Lons-le-Saulnier

in Burgundy, now Franche-Comté, were struck at the edifying life led by its inmates. On their return, they praised the place so highly to their master that he formed the design of establishing on his own grounds a monastery after this model, and of giving the government of it to St. Berno, the Superior of Baume. He therefore invited the holy Abbot to come and see him at Cluny. Berno went with one of his religious. The duke received them kindly, and told them to search out on his grounds some place to build a monastery. The two holy religious, delighted with the situation of Cluny, answered that they could not find any better suited. You must not think of that, said the duke to them: it is there that I keep my pack of hounds. Well, sire, replied Berno pleasantly, turn out the hounds and take in the monks.

The duke consented with a good grace. That moment he had the act of foundation drawn up, which is preserved to this day, and runs thus: "Wishing to employ for a holy purpose the goods which God has given me, I have thought it my duty to seek the friendship of the poor of Jesus Christ, and to render this good work perpetual by founding a community. I give therefore, for the love of God and Jesus Christ our Saviour, my lands of Cluny, that there may be built thereon, in honour of SS. Peter and Paul, a monastery, which may always afford a refuge to those who, leaving the world poor, desire to seek in the religious state the treasure of virtue."

The intention of the pious founder was fulfilled. The new community did incalculable good, and was remarkable for its regular discipline. This celebrated house gave great Popes to the Church, as well as holy Bishops who renewed the spirit of Christianity in the various dioceses of France.

Under the government of St. Odo, the immediate successor of St. Berno, Cluny reached its highest degree of glory. To make known the sanctity of the religious who dwelt there, we shall mention some of their observances. And first, the preparation of the bread which was to be used at the altar is worthy of notice. The religious picked out the wheat grain by grain, and washed it with all the care imaginable. It was then placed in a bag kept specially for this purpose, and a servant, well known as a virtuous man, carried it to a mill. He washed the millstones, and surrounded them with curtains, in order to keep off dust. Then, dressed in an alb, he covered his face with a veil, in order to prevent any sweat from falling therefrom. The same precautions were taken in regard to the flour: the brothers washed carefully the sieve through which it was to pass. Three Priests or Deacons, assisted by a lay-brother, did the rest.

After reciting Matins, these four religious washed their hands and faces. The first three put on albs, and kneaded the dough in cold water, so that it might be made as white as possible, and two others baked the hosts in the oven. The fire was of dry wood, and lighted expressly for the occasion, so great were the respect and veneration which the religious of Cluny entertained for the Blessed Eucharist.

As for their regular exercises, silence was so strictly kept among them day and night that they would have suffered death rather than break it before the hour of Prime. Psalms were recited during work. From the 13th of September till Easter there was only one meal.

The remains of bread and wine left in the refectory, were distributed to poor pilgrims. Besides, there were eighteen poor persons fed daily, and charity showed such a holy profusion during Lent that, one year, in the beginning of this season, there were seven thousand poor persons made recipients of an immense quantity of victuals and other alms.

These holy religious occupied themselves also with the education of children. They gave them the same training and care that sons of princes might have expected in the palaces of their fathers.

The exact discipline observed at Cluny, the great number of its religious, and the piety and devotion with which visitors were penetrated on entering this holy monastery, made it most celebrated. France, Germany, England, Spain, Italy, wished to have some religious from Cluny. They passed even into the East, and there was hardly a place in Europe where their Order was not known. Thus began the great reform of the monastical order. The Benedictines had the glory of it, for the religious of Cluny were the children of St. Benedict:[1] Cluny was the chief branch of this celebrated Order.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having come to the aid of Thy Church, by opposing great Saints to the scandals that afflicted her.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will have a great dread of giving bad example.*

[1] See Hélyot, t. V, p. 184.

LESSON XXXIV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (TENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church consoled: St. Gerard, Abbot of Brogne, in Belgium; St. Odo St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury; St. Matilda; St. Adelaide. The Church propagated and consoled: Conversion of the Poles and the Basques; St. Paul of Latra.

The fame of Cluny spread far and wide. The edifying regularity of this house soon drew to it a great many subjects, distinguished by their birth and their rank. Not only did laymen of the noblest families go thither to perform penance, but even Bishops quitted their Churches to embrace there the monastic life. Counts and dukes hastened to place monasteries under that of Cluny, that its holy Abbot might introduce a reform therein. Thus it came to pass that Odo could no longer confine himself to his own community, and that he laboured with indefatigable zeal for the re-establishment of discipline in all France, and even in Italy, whither he was called by the Sovereign Pontiff. This glorious mission cost the holy Abbot an immense amount of labour, but its success consoled him. Never was it more clearly seen what glory the zeal of one man could procure for God, when grounded on sanctity and guided by prudence.

Yet the Lord raised up other great personages to oppose themselves to scandal, and to labour in the important work of reformation. Among the number was St. Gerard, Abbot of Brogne in Belgium. Gerard was a young nobleman, engaged in the profession of arms from his childhood. A charming gentleness, an angelic purity of morals, set off by an exquisite politeness, and a tender love for the poor, made him the ornament of the court of the Count de Namur, then one of the most brilliant in Christendom. God rewarded the virtues of His young servant by the most precious graces. One day, as he was returning from the chase with his sovereign, he withdrew from the other noblemen, shut himself up in the chapel of Brogne, which belonged to his family, and remained prostrate there a long time before God. He found so much sweetness in this holy exercise, that he left it only with the utmost regret. Happy, he would say to himself, are those who have no other employment than to praise the Lord day and night, to live always in His divine presence, and to consecrate their hearts to Him without reserve!

Grace soon finished what it had so happily begun. Gerard,

having gone to Paris, left his attendants there that he might pay a visit to the abbey of St. Denis. Singularly edified by the fervour of the religious of this house, he begged them to receive him among them; but he could not fulfil without the leave of his sovereign the resolution that he had taken to renounce the world. He returned, therefore, to Namur in order to ask it; and only with the greatest difficulty did he succeed in obtaining it.

A novice all fervour and humility, the young nobleman was raised to the priesthood after ten years of trial. The Abbot of St. Denis then sent him to found an abbey on his estate at Brogne: the Saint obeyed. The new monastery soon became another Cluny. The reputation of the holy founder was so well established that there was given him a general inspection of all the abbeys of Flanders, wherein he restored exact discipline. His zeal extended even to Champagne, Lorraine, and Picardy. The monasteries of these various provinces, as well as those of Belgium, regarded him as their second patriarch. It was to him that they attributed the discipline which made them so celebrated. Towards the close of his life, the holy reformer, worn out with toil, confined himself entirely to his cell, in order to prepare for his death, which happened on the 3rd of October, 959.

Two men had sufficed to make virtue flourish again in all the monasteries of France and Belgium. St. Odo was placed by Providence in the first see of England, to work the same miracle there. As soon as he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, he laid down some wise rules for the instruction of the clergy, the nobility, and the people. He was supported by King Edward, who admired the views of the holy Prelate, and published laws for the re-establishment of good order throughout the kingdom. Thus did St. Odo remedy a great many abuses: his zeal was accompanied with such perfect meekness that England called him *Odo the Good.*

The work that he had so happily begun was completed by his successor, St. Dunstan. This great Saint had been prepared in retirement to fulfil worthily the important duties which Providence was about to confide to him. After a brilliant course of study, he had withdrawn to a little cell, where he joined fasting and prayer with manual labour. His labour consisted in making crosses, vases, censers, and other things intended for the divine worship. Sometimes he would occupy himself in painting, and in copying books. It was hence that he was drawn forth to fill the see of Canterbury. The Sovereign Pontiff named him, moreover, his Legate in England.

Obliged by his office to watch over all the Churches of the kingdom he travelled through its various provinces, instructing

the Faithful on the duties of a Christian life, and leading them to the practice of virtue by earnest and tender exhortations. The chief object of his zeal was the reformation of religious and of the clergy. He also showed much firmness in regard to some lay violators of ecclesiastical discipline: nothing could induce him to relent when there was question of maintaining good order.

We shall give an example. The King of England had been guilty of a great sin. The holy Archbishop was no sooner informed of it than he went to court. Like another Nathan, he said to the Prince, Sire, you have offended God! The King, touched with a salutary remorse, acknowledged his guilt, showed his repentance by tears, and asked a penance in proportion to his crime. The Saint imposed on him one of seven years. It consisted in not wearing his crown during all this time, in fasting twice a week, and in giving abundant alms. He enjoined on him besides to found a convent, where virgins might consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ. The King complied faithfully with all the articles of his penance. The seven years having passed, the holy Archbishop replaced the crown on his head, in an assembly consisting of the Bishops and Peers of the nation.

St. Dunstan never grew weary. Though advanced in years, he often made the visitation of the churches of the kingdom. Everywhere he preached, instructed the Faithful, settled differences, refuted errors, rooted out vices, and corrected abuses. After returning to Canterbury from one of these tours, he fell sick and prepared himself for his last hour by redoubling his fervour. On Ascension Thursday he preached three times, exhorting the Faithful to ascend, in spirit and by the liveliness of their desires, to Heaven with their Divine Leader. While he was speaking, his countenance seemed all radiant with glory. At the end of his third sermon, he recommended himself to the prayers of his hearers, and told his beloved people that he should ere long be separated from them: at these words everyone burst into tears. In the afternoon, the Saint returned calmly to the church, and pointed out the place where he wished to be buried. He then went to bed. Having received the holy Viaticum, he passed away on the following Saturday to a blessed immortality: the 19th of May, 988.[1]

While virtue was flourishing again in the monasteries of France, Belgium, and England, through the zeal of the great personages whom we have named, God was pleased to make it enter places where it would be least expected. The courts of kings, too often the retreat of vice, should become at this time the sanctuary of innocence. The demon of libertinism, banished from all its

[1] Godescard. t. VI et VIII.

lurking holes, should recognise the divine power that fights against it, and we ourselves should admire that Providence which, in all circumstances, even the most critical, secures an infallible triumph for the Church. At this period, we see St. Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia; St. Edward, King of England; St. Matilda, Queen of Germany; and St. Adelaide, Empress, reforming by their example both the courts in the midst of which they lived and the peoples subject to their authority.

St. Matilda was the daughter of Count Thierry, a powerful nobleman among the Saxons. Her parents, who were very religious, had her brought up under the eyes of her grandmother, the abbess of a monastery. She acquired in this holy school an extraordinary relish for prayer and for the reading of pious books. She learned also, princess as she was, to take part in every kind of work becoming persons of her sex, and insensibly acquired the habit of employing all her moments in things serious and worthy of a rational creature. At length came the time of her returning to the world, whither Providence called her.

The young Matilda was married to Henry, King of Germany. While the king, her husband, conquered the enemies of the State, Matilda won victories over the enemies of his salvation. She found leisure for prayer and meditation, in order to keep herself in fervour and humility. The serious reflections that she made on the eternal truths strengthened her soul against the attacks of pride, always hidden under the seductive charms of human splendour. She used often to visit the sick and afflicted, consoling them and exhorting them to patience. A lowly servant of the poor, the amiable princess would supply their wants with her own hands, and teach them to esteem a state which Jesus Christ Himself had chosen. She obtained the release of prisoners, and, when the rights of justice stood in the way of her doing so, she at least lightened their sufferings by plentiful alms. The chief object that she had in view in all this was to lead these unfortunate persons to expiate their crimes by the tears of a sincere repentance. The sweetest reward of her prayers and good works was to see the king her husband walking in the path of virtue, and to be able to help him in the execution of all his pious designs.

Henry having been struck with apoplexy, the Queen had every reason to fear for his life. She often went to prostrate herself at the foot of some altar, imploring his cure from God; but, when she was informed of his death by the tears and cries of the people, she submitted with resignation to the will of Heaven. Having had the Holy Sacrifice offered up for the repose of the soul of her virtuous husband, her first thought was to give the diamonds which she

was wearing to a Priest, as a proof of her total renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world.

After the death of her husband, the pious Queen had to undergo some severe trials. A rather marked predilection for Henry, the youngest of her children, kindled the jealousy of Otho, her eldest son. Matilda, guilty of the same fault as Jacob, expiated it with the same resignation; but at length God consoled her Her two sons, Otho and Henry, grew ashamed of their unworthy conduct: they were sincerely reconciled with each other, and they restored to their mother the property of which they had deprived her.

Matilda, re-established in her former wealth, distributed more alms than ever. She founded several religious houses, among them one for nuns, whither she withdrew from time to time to taste the sweets of solitude. The rest of her life was spent in practices of devotion and works of mercy. This Princess, the husband of a King and the mother of an Emperor, was to be seen taking pleasure in teaching the poor and ignorant how to pray, as she had already taught her servants. At length, full of days and merits, she beheld with calmness the approach of her last hour. Having made a public confession of her sins, she received the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Extreme Unction. Then, having had herself laid on a hair-cloth, with ashes sprinkled over her head, she expired, March the 14th, 968.

Prayer, meditation, and serious occupations preserved the virtue of Matilda from the seduction of external objects, whose charm is nowhere more dangerous than in courts. What can be opposed to this example by so many Christian men and women who imagine themselves born only for pleasure, and whose whole life is spent in a continual round of profane readings, frivolous conversations, and useless visits?

The other exalted lady who adorned her age with such a bright example, and whose virtue consoled the Church by contributing to the reformation of morals, was the Empress Adelaide. Daughter of Rodolphus II., King of Burgundy, this earthly angel was only six years old when she lost her father. Scarcely had Adelaide attained her sixteenth year, when she was married to Lothaire, King of Italy. The throne which she ascended was a Calvary for her; but she made use of the trials which God sent her to detach herself more and more from the world, and to confirm herself in those practices of piety which had been so dear to her from her earliest childhood.

A widow at twenty-eight, she saw her crown carried off by a conspirator. She was herself taken to Pavia, and shut up in a narrow prison, where she had to endure all kinds of indignities

out, having found a means to escape, she fled to Germany. The Emperor, Otho I., took on himself her defence, re-established her on the throne of Italy, and at length married her.

Transformed from a prisoner into an Empress, Adelaide was not elated at her prosperity. She employed her riches and influence only to do good to all mankind, especially the poor. Left a widow a second time after eleven years of marriage, the pious Princess devoted all her care to the education of her son, Otho II. And the reign of this Prince was happy, so long as he followed the counsels of his mother. But, having unfortunately let himself be corrupted by flatterers, he forgot all that he owed to her, and even banished her from his court. Adelaide wept over the wanderings of her son, and her sighs, like those of Monica, were heard. Otho's eyes were opened by misfortunes: he recalled his mother, showed himself submissive to her advice, and reformed the abuses that had been introduced into the government.

After the death of this prince, whose reign was not long, Adelaide found herself again an object of persecution: her son's wife treated her in the most outrageous manner. Adelaide endured all patiently and unrepiningly. A sudden death having carried off her daughter-in-law, she was obliged to charge herself with the regency during the minority of her grandson. Then was seen to what a degree she despised both the world and herself. She regarded the power with which she was invested as only a heavy burden. To fulfil rightly the obligations which it imposed on her, she gave herself up with untiring care to the administration of public affairs. Far from avenging herself on the authors of her past evils, she sought out every occasion of doing them good; but the diligence with which she applied herself to business of state did not prevent her from finding leisure for exercises of piety and mortification.

As devout under the imperial purple as if it were the drugget of the cloister, Adelaide had fixed hours for praying in her oratory, and bewailing the sins of the people that it was impossible for her to remedy. When she was obliged to show severity, she tempered it with mildness, and experienced in her own heart that pain and confusion which she caused to others. Hereby she made herself generally beloved, and led everyone to virtue. The regularity of her house afforded an edifying picture of a monastery. Her zeal extended beyond the limits of the empire. By her care pious missionaries were despatched to the North, where they preached the Faith to peoples still buried in infidelity. Burning with charity, the holy Empress, now very advanced in years, undertook a long journey to reconcile King Rodolphus, her nephew, with his subjects; but she died before reaching Burgundy, in the year 999.

While Our Lord was healing the wounds that scandal had inflicted on the Church, He gave it a new subject of joy by the conversion of peoples who were yet unacquainted with it. In effect, it was at this time that Religion made one of its fairest conquests: the Polish nation, which became for so many ages the bulwark of Christendom against the Turks, received the Faith. The conversion of the Poles was in a great measure the work of the Princess Dubrava, wife of the Duke of Poland. She won the affection of her husband so well that she induced him to ask for Baptism. His example was followed by most of his subjects.

Besides the infidels of the North, called to Christianity by the sare of St. Adelaide, a new people in the south of Europe were ceen entering the sacred fold at the voice of St. Leo, Bishop of Bayonne. The Basques were Cantabrians,[1] who, driven out of their own country, had established themselves in the mountains of Biscay, and in the deserts of the region of Labour as far as Bayonne. The light of Faith had shone upon this quarter from the early ages of Christianity, but the conquests and ravages of the Saracens had almost extinguished it.

Leo, born in Lower Normandy, was appointed by the Pope to make a mission among the Basques. He went to Bayonne, accompanied by his two brothers. In this town the fervent apostle made known Jesus Christ, and built a church under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. His evangelical zeal brought Religion to a flourishing state in the district of Labour, in Landes, beyond Bordeaux, in Biscay, and in Navarre. So much merit was worthy of a glorious reward. The most splendid to which the ambition of a Catholic missionary urges him is the palm of martyrdom. Our Saint received it, along with one of his brothers, from the hands of some pirates.

In the East, a new Antony was expiating the scandals that the Church was so earnestly striving to remove. It is thus that by the side of crime we always see a victim charged to atone for it. And in this tenth century, how many might we name, as well in the East as in the West, as well on the throne as in the lowliest conditions!

To speak only of one, we shall say that St. Paul of Latra renewed all the austerity of the early solitaries. Entering the desert very young, he took the monastic habit on Mount Olympus, and afterwards retired to the neighbourhood of Mount Latra: whence his name. Paul prayed continually, so much did the world need his intercession! He did not lie down to sleep: he only leaned

[1] Some suppose them to have come straight from the East.

against a tree or a stone. No one ever heard him utter an idle word. He confined himself to a cave, where some weeks his only food was a few green acorns, which made him so sick as to throw up blood. For three years he was exposed to great temptations; but, like St. Antony, he triumphed over them by fervour and perseverance in prayer.

A peasant, having discovered the abode of the holy man, brought him occasionally some little provisions. But for the most part he lived on the wild herbs that grew on the mountain side. Having need of water, he was favoured by God with a spring, near his cave, which continued to flow ever afterwards.

His name soon became famous. Many persons wished to live under his guidance, and he formed a Laura near his cave. Though he took little care of his own body, he provided amply for the wants of his disciples, in order to remove every pretext of relaxation. Twelve years rolled by in this manner. Paul, annoyed by the frequent visits that he received, left his solitude privately, and went away to hide himself in the most lonely part of the mountain. He came, however, to the Laura now and again to encourage his brethren.

The name of this great servant of God was not slow in reaching the ears of the whole Christian world. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus often wrote to consult him on important affairs, and always repented of not having followed his advice. He also received letters from Popes, Bishops, and many Princes. But always humble, always mortified, Paul regarded himself only as the last of men and the servant of all. His tenderness for the poor was so great that he gave them whatever he possessed, even his food and his clothes. He was once going to sell himself as a slave, in order to assist several poor persons who were in want.

Feeling his end draw nigh, he laid down some rules for the religious under his guidance. He then left his cell to go to the Laura, and caused Mass to be celebrated earlier than usual. A fever soon came on him, and he awaited death with the tranquillity inspired by a holy life. Until his last breath, this great expiator of the crimes of his age never ceased praying and encouraging his disciples to penance. On the 15th of December, 956, he went to receive in heaven the reward of his heroic virtues.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having placed virtue on the throne as well as in the hut. Thou dost teach us hereby that there is no state an obstacle to Heaven. Grant us

the grace to live as becomes Christians, whatever may be our condition.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will discharge my duties in a Christian manner.*

LESSON XXXV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (ELEVENTH CENTURY.)

The Church consoled: Reparation of Scandal in the Monastical Order in Germany; St. Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne; St. William, Abbot of Hirsauge. Reparation of Scandal in the Ecclesiastical Order: St. Peter Damian; St. Gregory VII.

ONE of the great wounds of the Church in the tenth century, the scandalous relaxation of the monastical order, had already been healed in France, England, most of Europe. There remained Germany, which had no less need of a reform. Two great saints were raised up by God to make virtue flourish again among the religious of these vast provinces.

The first was St. Bruno, Archbishop of Mayence, and brother of the Emperor Otho. From his childhood, he showed what he should afterwards be: the least irreverence in the service of God roused his zeal. One day, seeing his brother Prince Henry talking during Mass with Conrad, Duke of Lorraine, the pious child threatened him with the anger of God. After a brilliant course of study completed at Utrecht, he returned to the court, where he found nothing but inducements to piety: it was then a school of every royal and Christian virtue. St. Matilda, the Emperor's mother, as well as Otho himself and his wife Adelaide, gave eloquent lessons, by the regularity of their conduct, on religion and piety to the courtiers that surrounded them.

Thus, when scandals abounded, God was pleased to give the Church some great examples of virtue that consoled her in her affliction. Bruno, having been raised to the see of Cologne, applied himself to the work of making virtue flourish again in all Germany. He used his authority only to found good establishments, to protect the weak, to relieve the poor, to terrify the wicked, and to encourage the virtuous. He built or repaired a great many churches and monasteries. Germany became again one of the most edifying portions of the Church.

At the same time that St. Bruno was labouring so successfully in the correction of abuses among ecclesiastics and the Faithful, St.

William, Abbot of Hirsauge, was restoring the monastical order to its early splendour. The abbey of Hirsauge, situated in the diocese of Spires, was one of the most magnificent and celebrated in the possession of the Benedictines. Unfortunately, disorder had crossed the threshold of this home intended for sanctity. St. William, having been named its superior, endeavoured to drive out scandal. He began by sending some of his religious to Cluny, to study the customs of that model house. On their return, he called together the elders. Having examined with them the customs of Cluny and heard the report of the envoys, he left out whatever did not suit the habits of the country, or the climate, or the situation. He kept whatever he considered proper thereto; and according to this selection were reformed the abbey of Hirsauge and all others in Germany.

The consequence was that these religious soon spent their days and nights in singing the praises of God, in praying, in meditating, in studying the Holy Scriptures. Those who were not fit for labour of mind worked with their hands, in order to avoid idleness. The holy abbot, convinced that the reading of the sacred books is the food of the soul, appointed twelve writers to transcribe the Old and the New Testament, as well as the works of the Fathers. A greater number were employed in copying works of other kinds. One of the religious, a man experienced in all departments of science, had the inspection of both: he presided at their labours and corrected any mistakes. These humble and learned Benedictines, whom the world no longer knew, though enjoying the fruits of their toils, transcribed a multitude of works, which St. William sent to the monasteries of which he was the reformer or the founder.

Independently of the hundred and fifty religious who formed the abbey of Hirsauge, there were also lay-brothers, destined for manual labour, in order to provide for the wants of those who were engaged only in mental labour Among them were to be seen skilful workmen of every trade and occupation: architects, masons, stonecutters, carpenters, joiners, smiths, tailors, curriers, shoemakers, &c. They were exceedingly useful to the holy Abbot, for they alone made all the buildings of the new monastery at Hirsauge and the others that he founded.

Special rules, in keeping with their employments, divided their days in a manner equally beneficial to body and soul. Every night they assembled in the church to sing Matins, which were short, on account of the fatigues of the day. After Matins, these lay-brothers were at liberty to return to sleep; but most of them used to remain in the church until the choir-brothers had finished their prayers. At an early hour in the morning they heard Mass, and then

went to the chapter-room to tell their faults. Half of them communicated on one Sunday, and the other half the next ; on solemn festivals they all communicated. Those who went to the country and were not to return till after Sunday, communicated on the day of their departure.

Such was the kind of life that St. William introduced into his abbey, and into more than ninety monasteries which he established or reformed. Illustrious Archbishops, the lights of the Church and the apostles of their dioceses, came forth from these retreats of learning and virtue. At length, after ruling the abbey of Hirsauge for twenty-two years, and justly acquiring the title of the *Restorer of Monastical Discipline in Germany*, the holy Abbot went to enjoy in Heaven the reward of his useful labours.

Henceforth we behold the monastical order recalled to its primitive spirit, the devil vanquished, and the Church healed of its first wound. There yet remained another wound, deeper perhaps and more difficult to close : the clergy themselves had, in too great a number of their members, forgotten the sanctity of their vocation. Shameful vices dishonoured the sanctuary : we confess it with shame, yet with a holy pride. Shame, because it is humiliating to acknowledge the vices of those who ought to be the angels of the earth, the preachers of all virtues, and the representatives of a thrice holy God. A holy pride, because the scandals of the clergy are a conclusive proof of the divinity of a religion which is maintained ever pure and true in spite of its own ministers.

The Spirit of God, who never abandons the Church, enables her to find in herself, on the most critical occasions, a principle of life that renews and restores her to her early vigour. The reform of the clergy should naturally come from the head of the priesthood, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, appointed to feed both the lambs and the sheep, that is to say, both the Faithful and the Pastors. In point of fact, Pope St. Leo IX. applied himself earnestly to repair the breaches that the evils of the time had made in ecclesiastical discipline. Journeys into France and Germany, notwithstanding obstacles and dangers ; summoning of councils ; most wise regulations for the rooting out of abuses ; deposition of ministers of the altar found guilty ; even excommunication of those who refused to submit to the orders of the Church : such were among the works of this great Pope. And when he was no more, God gave successors who walked in his footsteps, and who were no less firm in reforming the manners of the clergy.

Their zeal was wonderfully seconded by a holy personage, raised up expressly in those unhappy times to oppose disorder in the house of God. St. Peter Damian, who rendered this important service to

the Church, was born at Ravenna, in Italy. Having, while very young, lost his father and mother, he fell into the hands of one of his brothers already married, who, forgetting the sentiments of nature towards him, treated him as the vilest slave. He would not give him any education; and, when he saw him a little grown, was not ashamed to send him to tend swine. However, the young Peter had none but excellent dispositions. The use that he one day made of a piece of money which he had found, shows that the sentiments of his soul were far above the lowliness of his state. He took the money to a priest, begging him to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of the souls of his parents.

God, whose providence had great designs over the young herd, drew him out of slavery, and supplied him with means of being instructed. Peter made rapid progress, and was soon in a position to teach others. The superior style in which the new professor acquitted himself of his duties drew many persons to his school, and secured him a considerable income. The ease at which he found himself, joined with the applause that he received on all sides, seemed to him a very dangerous temptation: not to yield to it, he adopted all the measures prescribed by Christian vigilance.

He prayed much, wore a hair-shirt under his clothes, and mortified his flesh by the practice of fasting and watching. If a temptation chanced to allure him to sin during the night, he arose promptly, went off and plunged himself into water, and there remained until his limbs were benumbed with cold. He gave plentiful alms, and admitted the poor to his table, considering himself happy in being able to serve them with his own hands, because Faith discovered Our Lord to him under their rags.

So many precautions did not appear to him enough, and he made up his mind to leave the world. He withdrew to the Hermits of Font Avellano, a celebrated retreat in Umbria, at the foot of the Apennines. The hermits dwelt two and two in cells apart: most of their time was devoted to reading and prayer. They lived on bread and water four days of the week. Though wine was the usual drink of the country, they had none except for the sick and for the holy sacrifice of the Mass. They went barefooted, and often took the discipline. Peter gave himself up to all these practices with wonderful fervour.

But the Pope, seeing how useful to the Church might be the gifts of piety and knowledge with which God had endowed this great man, drew him forth out of his solitude in order to raise him to the highest ecclesiastical dignities: he made him Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia. The new Prelate laboured with an untiring zeal and a holy liberty to banish remissness, and to have the laws of the

Church strictly observed. The reform of ecclesiastical communities, which was arranged in a council, held at Rome by Alexander II. in 1062, was one of the fruits of his zeal. From the fourth century there had been communities of ecclesiastics who held no private property, and who lived together in cities under the authority of the Bishop. They practised, as far as their functions permitted, the detachment, retirement, and austerities of solitaries. This discipline had been almost ruined by the incursions of the barbarians. It was brought back to its early perfection in the time of St. Peter Damian, and those who followed it were called *Canons Regular*.

Before his death, the blessed man could enjoy the fruits of his zeal: numerous congregations of Canons Regular were established. With the habit of retirement, a relish for study and for an occupied life reappeared among ecclesiastics. Learning and virtue found in them zealous propagators, and hosts of masters and models. Peter Damian had no sooner accomplished the great mission which Providence had intrusted to him than he returned to the desert of Font Avellano. He re-entered his cell with great joy, and shut himself up there as in a prison.

An expiator of disorders that he had all his life striven to remove, he loaded himself with iron chains, and tore his innocent body with severe scourgings. His fasts were extraordinary: he used to spend the first three days of Advent and Lent without taking any food. It often happened that during the forty days of Lent he tasted nothing cooked, and lived only on herbs steeped in water. A mat stretched out on the ground served him for a bed: his life was a long and cruel martyrdom. Alas! nothing less was required as a counterpoise to the crimes of the sanctuary. Yet as nature could not bear up for any lengthened period against such austerities, the holy man had hours fixed for manual labour: he then occupied himself in making little articles of wood. At last, having reached the age of eighty-three years, he fell asleep sweetly in the arms of the Good Master whose cause he had so valiantly defended.

Notwithstanding so many happy reforms, there was reason to fear that disorder and scandal, which had so very much afflicted the Church, would break out anew, if the chief cause that had introduced them into the sanctuary and into monasteries were allowed to remain. This fatal source, from which flowed forth for nearly a century a torrent of iniquities, was *investitures*. We are going to speak of them. Emperors, kings, princes, and lords, especially in Germany, had arrogated to themselves the right of nominating,

[1] Hélyot, t. II, pp. 62, 106.

without any intervention of ecclesiastical authority, to all the ecclesiastical dignities that were in their dominions or in the dominions of their vassals. Now, for the most part, they nominated, not exemplary men, but creatures that flattered their passions, or courtiers that could best support them in their views. As they required money, whether to indulge their luxury or to make war, they put up bishoprics and abbacies to auction, and gave them to the highest bidder. A good, regular, ecclesiastical behaviour was in their eyes the most miserable of recommendations.

Hence, innumerable evils in the Church. Dignities being attainable only by money, everyone strove to amass it. A shameful greed, waste of the property of the poor, and vexatious treatment of the people, were the consequences. This was not all. Sometimes the episcopal dignity was given by evil choice to serfs or profligates, because such persons, being in office, would not dare to reprove the sins of the great ones who had raised them thereto. As you see, the disorders of the clergy arose chiefly from the fact that the world had invaded the sanctuary, and had propagated all its vices and criminal habits there. Ever holy, ever incorruptible, the Church might say to the world in all truth, *If I have bad Priests, it is because you have made them so.*

These kinds of nominations by temporal lords were a manifest usurpation of ecclesiastical rights. The Church, from her cradle, had wisely provided for the election of her Pontiffs, and foreseen the evils that would occur if the choice of Bishops were left exclusively in the hands of sovereigns. This is the reason why, in the apostolic canons, she pronounces deposition against Bishops who obtain their dignity from the secular power, without the participation of the Church.[1] The right of nominating her ministers belongs essentially to the Church. She invited the people, indeed, to concur in the election of her Pontiffs; but the Bishops were always the final judges. The people stood by as witnesses: they suggested rather than named.

Temporal princes, governed by passion, had trampled this divine arrangement under foot: humanly speaking, it was all over with the Church. Enslaved by the secular power, dishonoured by her own ministers, attacked even in her fundamental constitutions, she was going to succumb, and society with her. But immortality had been promised to her, and never was better seen the truth of this expression: *The gates of hell shall not prevail against thee.* God called forth a reformer: this was Pope St. Gregory VII.

When placing in the world this new defender of the shaken

[1] Can. xxx.

Church, God said to him as to Jeremias, *I have set thee to root up, to destroy, to plant, and to build; I have made thee as a wall of brass before kings and princes, and they shall fight against thee and shall not prevail.* The child dignified with this sublime mission was born in 1013, in the little town of Saone, in Tuscany, and was called Hildebrand. His father was a decent carpenter, who lived by the labour of his hands Having early remarked the happy dispositions of his son, he gave him in charge to the Abbot of the monastery of Our Lady on the Aventin Hill, to be instructed in the liberal arts, and to have his character formed. Hildebrand, in both respects, fully justified the hopes of his father and his masters.

Adorned with the aureola of his brilliant success, the young pupil went to Cluny, where he made profession of the religious state. It was in this celebrated house that he was formed, by the practice of all virtues, for the great mission which he should one day accomplish. His sanctity and other eminent qualities caused him to be named Prior of Cluny. The Emperor of Germany soon chose him as a preceptor for his son Henry. Later on, the holy Pope Leo IX. called him to the direction of the greatest affairs in the Church. The extraordinary wisdom and the immovable firmness with which, during more than twenty years, he fulfilled these difficult functions, won him universal confidence. All good people looked to him as the only hope of the Church.

After the death of Pope Alexander II., Hildebrand, who was then Archdeacon of the Church in Rome, commanded a fast of three days in order to know the will of God in the choice of a new Pontiff. A great many Cardinals, Bishops, Abbots, Deacons, Priests, Monks, and other clerics went in procession to the Church of St. Peter. Here a countless multitude of persons, of both sexes and of all ranks, had already assembled to celebrate the funeral of the deceased Pope. Suddenly, a great commotion appeared among the people and the clergy All cried out with one voice, It is Archdeacon Hildebrand that St. Peter has chosen to succeed him!

Such an incident made Hildebrand uneasy. He ascended a pulpit in order to calm the people, and to turn them away from their project. But the clergy and the people cried out anew, St. Peter has chosen Hildebrand to be our Lord and Pope! The next moment he was invested, according to custom, with the purple robe, and, the tiara having been placed on his head, he was seated in St. Peter's chair. The Cardinals and Bishops said to the people, Archdeacon Hildebrand is the Pope whom we have elected. He will be our Lord, and will bear the name of Gregory. This is our choice: is it pleasing to you?—It is.—Do you wish it?—We do.—Do you approve of it? We do.

Gregory was sixty years old when he was elected.

Sent by God to sweep away abuses, to resist iniquity, whether it appeared in the name of knowledge or under the garb of royalty—the New Athanasius joined to a rare sanctity and great experience many other most eminent qualities. Sincerity and tenderness of heart; justice in the formation of plans, and prudence and firmness in their execution; incredible activity; general vigilance, extending from the throne of the monarch to the cell of the religious; courage in encountering all dangers; the fertility of a powerful genius, capable of expanding with circumstances, versed in profane as well as sacred literature, strong in adversity, and calm in prosperity; modesty, sobriety, chastity, hospitality, and the liberty of one indebted solely to his merit and virtue for his elevation: such were among the brilliant qualities that mounted the chair of St. Peter with the new Pontiff.

From the moment of his election, Gregory set it before him as a duty to justify the hopes which the Christian world had formed of him. *To save society by means of the Church*, was the end of all his labours. For this purpose it was necessary in the first place to make the Church independent of the temporal power, which had enslaved and dishonoured it by giving it unworthy ministers. The Vicar of Our Lord undertook this glorious deliverance, and, after a long and obstinate struggle, obtained it. Holy Pontiff! may the world bless thee, while Heaven crowns thy merits! Modern nations! fall on your knees before the Moses of the middle ages: it is to him that you are indebted for your freedom, your intelligence, your glory, your civilisation; for it was he that saved the Church, the source of all these good things! Gregory was obliged, for the attainment of his object, to adopt rigorous measures with the Emperor Henry IV., the Nero of his age. On this account, impious men have insulted the memory of the Roman Pontiff; but truth, the daughter of time, has made everything clear. The calumniators have been condemned. At the present day, Protestants themselves are among the foremost to vindicate the holy Pontiff and his extraordinary wisdom.[1]

[1] One of the most important and influential publications in England, written by the intellectual leaders of the country, the *Quarterly Review*, speaks thus of the temporal power of the Sovereign Pontiffs in the middle ages:—

It was a splendid sovereignty that the Innocents and the Gregorys ventured to establish on this idea. . . Respect me, submit, obey, it said; in exchange, I will give you order, science, union, organisation, progress, and even, as far as possible in such a period, quiet and peace. Nothing narrow, nothing personal, nothing barbarous, in this sovereign domination! It extended to the limits of the Christian world; it opposed the inroads of Islamism; it counterbalanced, by intellectual and moral power, the brutal and sanguinary power of iron

An object for the fury of his enemies, the great Pope found himself obliged to leave Rome and to retire to Salerno. Ere long the intrepid defender of the Church and society, having reached his seventy-second year, began to feel a great weakness, which announced his approaching end. This exhaustion went on increasing till the month of May, when it became impossible for him to leave his bed. He then called to him the Cardinals and Bishops: they ranged themselves round his bed, addressing fervent prayers to Heaven, and blessing the illustrious Pontiff, as well for his constant efforts as for the lofty lessons which he had given to the world. Gregory said to them, "My beloved brethren, I regard my labours as very little; what gives me confidence is that I have loved justice and hated iniquity." And, as all present were bewailing what would be their condition after his death, the Holy Father raised his eyes to Heaven, stretched out his hands, and said to them, "I shall go up there, and I shall earnestly recommend you to the infinitely good God."[1]

Having entertained the Bishops on various edifying subjects, he added, "In the name of Almighty God and in virtue of the powers confided to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, I command you not to recognise as the lawful Pope any person that has not been elected and ordained in accordance with the holy canons and the

sceptres and brazen lances. On the one hand, the Papacy fought against the Crescent; on the other, it stifled the remains of the stubborn Paganism of the North. It rallied, as to a central point, all the moral and spiritual forces of the human species. It was a despot, as the sun that turns the globe is a despot.

General barbarity and ferocity were bringing about a general disorganisation. It revived all. It insulted, you say, the diadems of kings and the rights of nations; it laid its bold foot on the necks of monarchs: nothing could exist without the permission of Rome.—Grant that; still this *presumptuous* domination was an immense benefit. Mental force obliged brute force to yield to it. Of all the triumphs that intellect ever won over matter, this was perhaps the most sublime.

Let us go back to the time when right, struck dumb at the sight of the sword, cringed in a blood-stained arena. Was it not admirable to see a German Emperor, in the plenitude of his power, at the very moment when he was hurrying on his soldiers to crush the germs of the republics of Italy, suddenly stopped, and rendered unable to go farther; to see tyrants, arrayed in their armour and surrounded by their soldiers, Philip Augustus of France and John of England, for example, suspend their vengeance, and appear quite helpless? . . At whose voice, I ask? At the voice of a poor old man, dwelling in a remote city, with two battalions of indifferent troops, and having scarcely a few leagues of disputed ground! Is not this a spectacle calculated to elevate the soul, a wonder greater than any of those in which Christian legends abound?

[1] On the last moments of St. Gregory, his burial, and his tomb, see *Les Trois Rome*, t. III, p. 40.

authority of the Apostles." The great idea of the independence of the Church never left him till his last breath.

The moment of his death drew near. His ever-increasing weakness making his end present to him, he again pronounced these words, which were his last: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore I die in a strange land." Thus departed the great Pope, whose labours and sufferings exceeded those of all his predecessors since the time of the Apostles. A multitude of miracles, wrought during his life and after his death, proved the sanctity of his works, and made him be placed by the Church on the altars of the Catholic world.[1]

Before concluding, it will not be superfluous to say a word on the "pretensions" in regard to temporal affairs with which St. Gregory has so often been reproached. (*a*) These reproaches never come from true Catholics. (*b*) They are addressed, not only to St. Gregory VII., but to all Popes without exception. (*c*) What is called a pretension in regard to the temporal affairs of sovereigns, is *a right inherent to the Papacy*. The infallible exponent of the eternal law of justice, it has a right to pronounce on social cases of conscience as on all others; consequently, to declare whether the violation of the law of justice is such that subjects are no longer bound to obey a prevaricating prince. Unless you want to consecrate the most monstrous despotism, by admitting a power accountable to none but itself, you must recognise the social supremacy of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. In the absence of the decrees of the Vatican, peoples and kings, who will not yield thereto, have no other way of terminating their differences than the cannon or the dagger. This we have seen, this we see, this we shall see, so long as the social right of the Church is not recognised as a reality.[2]

[1] See, on St. Gregory VII., what is said by Canon Muzarelli; also, the Life of this great Pope, written by M. Voigt, a Protestant professor in the University of Hall, and translated into French by M. l'abbé Jager, 2 vols., octavo, Paris, 1838; lastly, the Life published, from original documents, by M. l'abbé Davin, octavo, 1860. In 1580, the name of Gregory VII. was inserted in the Roman Martyrology, corrected by order of Gregory VIII. Under the pontificate of Benedict XIII., it was placed in the Breviary, together with a legend, which was suppressed in France by parliament, and in all the states of Germany and Italy by the emperor, as contrary to the rights of kings. Here is theology!

And this was done at a time when an audacious philosophy, encouraged by kings themselves, was preparing to overthrow thrones according to its caprices, and to change into principles all the extravagancies of anarchy. Here is logic!

For the rest, parliaments and kings had soon to pay dearly for their inconsistency. Here is justice!

[2] In our history of *Cæsarism*, we have shown the unhappy consequences, for peoples as well as for kings, of denying the social power of the Church,

In the middle ages, the right claimed by Sovereign Pontiffs was, moreover, *in many cases*, the same as that exercised by all lords and sovereigns of the period. And certainly it is as ridiculous to make it a crime in Gregory to have claimed the seigniory of Hungary or Dalmatia, as it would be to make it such in an Emperor of Germany to have claimed the seigniory of Burgundy or Lorraine: both have the same rights, which are those of the period. Before St. Gregory

and also the justice of the sentences pronounced by Sovereign Pontiffs against princes that tyrannised over their peoples. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, at a time when France was giving a splendid signal for a return to public rectitude, from the disorders of ancient paganism, the great Pope Boniface VIII., terrified at the evils that were about to burst on Europe, published for a last time the charter of Christian politics.

In language full of mildness and dignity, the bull *Unam sanctam* recalls the great principles on which rests the supremacy of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and which alone can serve as a bridle for the despotism of kings and a rampart for the liberty of peoples. This monument of pontifical solicitude is so important, that we are going to give it in its entirety:—

"Boniface, servant of the servants of God. Faith obliges us to believe and to profess that the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church is one; and we sincerely do so. Outside of it there is no salvation, no forgiveness of sins, the Spouse in the Canticles saying, *One is my dove, my perfect one—she is the only one of her mother*. It forms one mystical body, whose head is Christ, and God is the head of Christ. In it, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.

"At the time of the deluge, the ark of Noe, a figure of the Church, was one. Formed in one place, it had only one master, one pilot, Noe, and we see that out of it everything on earth perished. We venerate it as one, according to the words of the Lord, speaking by the prophet, *Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword, and my only one from the hand of the dog*. He prayed for His soul, that is to say, for Himself as Head of the Church, and for His body—He calls this body His only one—that is to say, for the Church, because of the unity of belief in the Sacraments and of charity in the Church. It is the seamless robe of the Lord, which was not cut, but drawn for by lot.

"Wherefore, the one, only Church is but one body, having, not two heads like a monster, but one head, namely, Jesus Christ—Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ—and the Successor of Peter. For the Lord said to Peter himself, *Feed my sheep*, in general—which shows that He confided all to him without any exception. If then the Greeks and others still say that they were not confided to Peter and his successors, they must acknowledge that they are not the sheep of Jesus Christ, since the Lord says in St. John that there shall be one flock, and one shepherd, and one fold.

"That he has in his power two swords, the one spiritual and the other temporal, is what the Gospel teaches us; for the Apostles having said, *Behold, here are two swords*—that is to say, in the Church, since it was the Apostles that spoke—the Lord did not answer them, It is too much, but *It is enough*. Assuredly, whosoever denies that the temporal sword should be in the power of Peter, despises that saying of the Lord, *Put up thy sword into the scabbard*.

"The spiritual sword and the material sword are therefore both in the power of the Church; but the latter must be employed for the Church and the former by the Church. The first is in the hands of the Priest; the second in

ascended the pontifical throne, many sovereigns had perceived at Rome more wisdom, justice, and intelligence than anywhere else, and at the same time a tutelar authority, and had left, before dying, their kingdoms as fiefs to the Holy See.

Let no one suppose that the lords or sovereigns who made these donations, were led to do so by motives of piety alone. No; their interests had weight. By declaring themselves vassals of the Holy

the hands of kings and soldiers, but under the direction of the Priest. One of these swords must be dependent on and subordinate to the other: the temporal must be subject to the spiritual authority.

"In effect, according to the Apostle, all power comes from God: whatever powers exist are ordained by God. Now, they would not be *ordained*, nor set in order, by God, if one sword were not subject to the other, and were not guided, as an inferior, by it to the execution of the sovereign will. For, according to St. Denis, it is a divine law that what is least should be subordinated by intermediate things to what is highest; thus, in virtue of the laws of the universe, all things are led to order immediately and in the same manner, but lower things by upper things, what is inferior by what is superior.

"Now, the spiritual power far surpasses in dignity all earthly power, and we ought to hold this as much for certain as it is clear that spiritual things excel temporal things. This is also what is plainly indicated by the oblation of tithes; the blessing, the sanctification, the reception of power; and the government of the world itself.

"In effect, according to the testimony of infallible truth, it belongs to the spiritual power to institute the terrestrial power, and to condemn it if it is not good. Thus is verified the oracle of Jeremias in regard to the Church and the ecclesiastical power, *Lo, I have set thee over the nations, and over kingdoms*, and so on.

"If then the terrestrial power go astray, it will be judged by the spiritual power. If the spiritual power of a lower order go astray, it will be judged by that which is of a higher order. If it be the supreme power—man cannot judge it, but God alone, according to the words of the Apostle, *The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man.* Now, this power, which, though it has been given to man and is exercised by man, is not human, but divine, Peter received from the mouth of God Himself. And He whom Peter confessed, made it for him and his successors as immovable as a rock. For the Lord said to him, *Whatsoever thou shalt bind*, &c. Therefore, whosoever resists this power so ordained by God, resists the order of God Himself, unless, like the Manichee, he imagines there are two principles: which we judge to be an error and a heresy. So Moses attests that it was in the *beginning*, and not in the *beginnings*, that God created heaven and earth.

"Hence, every human creature ought to be subject to the Roman Pontiff, and we declare, affirm, define, and pronounce that this subjection is absolutely necessary to salvation." (Porro subesse Romano Pontifici omnem humanam creaturam declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronuntiamus, omnino esse de necessitate salutis.) Bulla Dogmatica Bonifacii VIII., a Clemente V. confirmata et in corpore juris canonici inserta. *Bullar. Rom.* Bonif. VIII.

By this luminous exposition of principles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ wished to turn Europe aside from the dreadful path on which it was treading—the path of Cæsarism. Rejecting as a usurpation the social control of the Papacy

See, they secured to themselves and their children a powerful protection against the usurpation of their neighbours and the rebellion of peoples, who would become more docile, having in the Holy See a guarantee against the injustice of rulers. This protection was of great importance at the period, for the authority of the Holy See alone was then universally recognised and respected, even by the most barbarous peoples.

Whenever an Emperor wanted to possess himself of a state connected by vassalage with Rome, the Pope stopped him at his entrance, and forbade him to go an inch further. He said what St. Gregory VII. said to Vezelin, "We are greatly astonished that, having so long ago promised to be faithful to St. Peter and us, you want to rise up against him whom the apostolic authority has made king in Dalmatia. Wherefore, on the part of St. Peter, we forbid you to take arms against that king, because your enterprise against him would be against the Holy See. If you have any subject of complaint, you ought to ask justice of us and await our judgment. Otherwise, know that we shall draw against you the sword of St.

it began the era of revolutions, and, after consecrating the supremacy of force, by declaring itself free from spiritual authority, established in effect the control of the dagger. Behold what we are come to!

This is the place to say a word on the coercive power of the Church. When a man has received the Faith in conformity with the divine principle, the Church can require of this man, who has become her child, to keep the Faith, and this even by the help of coercive measures. In acting thus, the Church no more violates human liberty than the civil magistrate does in requiring, by severe penalties, that a citizen should fulfil his engagements, and regulate his conduct according to the laws of the society to which he belongs.

In a word, the Church cannot act directly by her laws and her penalties on those who have not yet become her members, though they are bound in the sight of God to become such. But she remains, *by right*, mistress and queen of all those who have been incorporated with her, and, as a consequence, can lawfully exercise, when there is need, her coercive powers over them. Appointed to lead men to their supernatural end, she has received from God the powers necessary to fulfil her mission. Now, among these powers is the right to have recourse to penal coercion in regard to those who belong to her.

St. Augustine, who had at first shared to some extent the opinion of many liberals of our days, changed his views later on, and declared in favour of coercive measures. (S. Aug., *ad Vincent.*, epist. 48; *ad Donat.*, epist. 204; *Tract. super Joann.* ii, c. 3; *Cont. litteras Sesil.*, lib. II, c. 79.)

The teachings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas on coercion in the matter of religious belief have become the practice and the doctrine of the Church.

Far from having ever exercised any compulsion with Pagans or Jews, to make them decide on embracing the Faith, the Catholic Church has declared that Jews ought not to be forced to receive Baptism: *Statuimus ut nullus invitos vel nolentes Judæos ad baptismum venire compellat.* (Decret. lib. V, t. VI, c. 9.)

But while she repudiates by her words and her example every kind of com-

Peter, to punish your audacity as well as the temerity of all those who favour you in this enterprise."[1]

Such was the language of the Pope. Henceforth, we need no longer be surprised at the liberality of princes: it was interested. Every weak king, unsteadily seated on his throne, begged the dependence of the Holy See, and received it even as a favour. Thus, Demetrius, King of the Russians, sent his son to Rome in order to most earnestly entreat St. Gregory to receive his kingdom as a fief of St. Peter. This is what we see in a letter of Gregory to Demetrius: "Your son, visiting the tombs of the Apostles, has come and declared to us most humbly (*devotis precibus*) that he wished to hold the kingdom from our hands, assuring us that you approve of his request. Having regard to your consent and to the piety of the suppliant, we have yielded to his wishes and granted him the object of his solicitations."[2] The reason for this step on the part of the King of the Russians is found in the same letter: the Pope promised him his protection whenever he should have need of it in a just cause.

pulsion in regard to Jews and Pagans, the Spouse of Jesus Christ has always, by her laws and her acts (more or less severe, according to times and places) against heretics and apostates, shown in a most evident manner that she claims for herself the right of bringing them back to their senses by coercive measures.

Still more: the Church has proclaimed in solemn definitions the existence of her coercive power. Without adducing the bull *Licet juxta doctrinam* of Pope John XXII.; the fourteenth canon of the seventh session of the holy Council of Trent; the bull *Auctorum fidei* of Pope Pius VI., proscribing (Proposit. iv) the opinion which asserted that the Church had not received from God, besides the power of *direction* by way of counsel, the power of *coercion* and *compulsion* by means of *salutary punishments*, let us only state that Pope Pius IX. has condemned, among other propositions of John Nuytz, this one: *Ecclesiam vim inferendi potestatem non habere. . .*

What are we to conclude hence? We must, with Suarez, whose authority is so great, according to Bossuet himself, regard as a *truth of faith* that the Church has the power to impose coercive penalties on heretics. *Ecclesia habet potestatem ad puniendos et coercendos hæreticos . . . quod tanquam certum de fide tenendum est.* (Suarez, *De Fide*, Disput. XX, sect. 3, n. 6.)*

Does this mean that the Church ought always and everywhere to turn all her coercive power against her rebellious children? No, the Church is a mother at the same time that she is a queen: a right is one thing, and the use of that right is another. Invested with a coercive power for the sacred interests of souls, the Spouse of Christ, guided by the Holy Ghost, reserves to herself the choice of exercising or not exercising her strict rights, according as she judges one course or the other useful or necessary.

[1] *Epist.*, vii, 4. [2] *Ib.*, xi, 74.

* If the reader wishes to know in detail the coercive penalties that the Church can impose, he may profitably consult St. Thomas, 2a 2æ, q. 10; Suarez, *De Fide*, Disput. xx, sect. 3, n. 6; Devoti, *De pœnis*, &c.

This right of seigniory, freely granted to the Popes in the interests of peoples and kings, explains to some extent the political history of the middle ages. Too often did nobles and peoples think it a small matter to rebel against kings, but they would obey Bishops and Popes. Sovereigns therefore threw themselves into their arms, in order to provide for themselves. Hence it came to pass most happily that Popes, besides retaining the right inherent to their office, obtained a vast amount of influence with which to mediate between sovereigns and sovereigns, between kings and peoples. If they were supporters of a monarchy, they also served as a counterpoise to it, when it was disposed to go astray; and, under this head, they rendered immense services to humanity, which moreover have been appreciated by enlightened men of all classes.

"The papal power," says a Protestant minister, "disposing of crowns, prevented despotism from becoming outrageous. Hence, in those dark ages, we see no example of tyranny to be compared with that of the Domitians of Rome. A Tiberius was an impossibility: Rome would have crushed him. Great despotisms occur when kings are persuaded that there is no one above them; it is then that the intoxication of unbounded power gives birth to the most atrocious crimes."[1]

A modern publicist, likewise a Protestant, adds these remarkable words: "In the middle ages, when there was no social order,[2] the papacy alone saved *perhaps*[3] all Europe from total barbarism. It created relations between the most distant peoples. It was a common centre, a rallying-point for isolated states. It was a supreme tribunal raised amid the general anarchy, a tribunal whose decrees were *sometimes*[4] as respectable as they were respected. It grappled with the despotism of emperors, restored the balance of power, and lessened the inconveniences of the feudal system."[5]

Everyone knows the opinion of Leibnitz on this matter. "As for the Empire of Germany in particular, the Popes had over this crown a special power, which formed a part of the public law. The Saxon princes, addressing themselves to St. Gregory VII., in concert with a multitude of Lombards, French, Bavarians, and Swedes, say that it is not proper that a prince so wicked as the Emperor Henry IV., and better known by his crimes than by his

[1] *Essai sur l'hist. du Christ.*, par Ch. Coquerel, p. 75.
[2] There was more than there is now.
[3] Why say *perhaps*?
[4] Another limitation: you ought to be candid!
[5] Ancillon, *Tableau des révol. du syst. polit. de l'Europe*, Introd. See our *Histoire du Césarisme.*

name, shall wear the crown, especially as he has not received the royal dignity from Rome; that the right of appointing kings must be restored to Rome; and that, accordingly, it is for the Pope and the city of Rome to choose, with the advice of the lords, a prince whose good conduct and prudence may render him worthy of so great an honour. They remind him at the same time that the empire is only a fief of the Eternal City.' From this testimony it is clear that Rome conferred the royal dignity, and had the right of selecting or deposing, in concert with princes, the rulers of the Germanic Empire. This right was publicly recognised, and its exercise was called for on solemn occasions by men most interested in denying it, if such a thing had been possible."[2]

These are a few things that ought to be known, under pain of continually talking nonsense when there is reference to the conduct of the Popes of the middle ages, especially that of St. Gregory.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee with my whole heart for having saved the world, by saving the Church, through the ministry of St. Gregory and the other Saints whom Thou didst send to put a stop to scandal. Grant us a great zeal for justice.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often pray for the Sovereign Pontiff.*

LESSON XXXVI.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (ELEVENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church consoled: Foundation of the Great St. Bernard; Foundation of the Order of Camaldoli; St. Romuald. The Church attacked: Berengarius. The Church defended: Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury. The Church afflicted: Michael Cerularius; the Mahometans.

During the eleventh century, the Church might say in all truth to her Divine Spouse, *According to the multitude of my sorrows, Thy comforts have given me joy!* In effect, if many tears had flowed from the eyes of this dear Spouse, God took care to wipe them away by raising up a host of personages eminent for sanctity. Few ages present us with so many Saints in the episcopate or on the

[1] Proponunt deinde imperium esse beneficium urbis æternæ. *Avent.*
[2] Life of St. Greg. VII.: Introd.

throne. To speak only of kings, we see St. Henry, Emperor of Germany; St. Olaus, King of Norway; St. Stephen, King of Hungary, and St. Emeric, his son; St. Canute, King of Denmark; St. Ladislaus, King of Hungary. There they are to attest to posterity that, in those evil days, Religion was as well able to produce saints as in the happiest days.

What also shows the vigour and the life-giving virtue of this immortal Church is that the care of healing her wounds did not prevent her from watching over the wants, and even the corporal wants, of her children. At this epoch appeared one of those marvels of charity which reveal all that is divine in Christianity, and all that is maternal in the heart of the Catholic Church.

In the beginning of the eleventh century there dwelt in Savoy a gentleman named Bernard de Menthon. Descended from one of the best families of the country, he spent his first years in innocence. When he was of age, he refused every kind of position in the world, and consecrated himself to the service of God in the ecclesiastical state, whose duties he fulfilled with great exactness. During forty-two years he preached with indefatigable zeal, and everywhere banished superstition and ignorance. Having once been informed that a famous statue of Jupiter was adored on a neighbouring mountain, he made his way up to it with great difficulty, and overthrew it. A new Daniel, he destroyed the credit of the priests of this pretended god, by showing that they shut themselves up in a hollow pillar to give forth their oracles. Near this place, consecrated to cruel superstitions, he built a monastery and a hospice, to which he gave his name. Such was the founder and such the origin of the convent of the Great St. Bernard.

Situated on the summit of the Alps, it is acknowledged to be the most elevated point of the old world on which man has dared to fix his abode. It is a bleak spot: the most severe winter reigns there for six months of the year. Such a quantity of snow falls there that, though the door of the convent is placed very high, it is usually necessary to cut stairs in the snow, in order to get up and down. The ground is stony, or rather a dead rock: it is uncovered only for three months. It is not uncommon to meet with frost and to see large pieces of ice there in August. The little lake at the foot of the rock on which the monastery stands is frozen from September, and serves as a road for travellers till the early days of June. Winds blow there continually, and, finding themselves, as it were, obstructed in a narrow pass, are very violent. They sweep the snow before them often in such quantities as to obscure the air.

Clouds, too, settle there, and often so heavy and dark that the convent cannot be seen a few steps off. Such is the rarity of the

air that the pulse beats eighty times in a minute. Hence those religious who would have lived forty years on the plain, live only thirty on the mountain. They know it, and this consideration does not stay their devotedness. At the top of St. Bernard, and far below it, there does not grow a single shrub. In the neighbourhood of the convent there is absolutely nothing to be gathered : all sorts of provisions have to be brought up from the valleys. Wood, of which there is a great consumption, must be carried on the backs of horses or mules many miles, and along very rugged paths, which hardly afford a safe footing for six weeks.

It is in this frightful place, in this region forgotten by nature, that Christian charity has assembled men who, by a sublime devotedness, consecrate their lives to the reception, entertainment, and relief of such of their kind as chance, misfortune, or curiosity leads to their monastery. It is calculated that eighteen thousand travellers annually pass Mount St. Bernard.

When, after much fatigue and danger, one has climbed to the top of this terrible mountain, what a sweet emotion bursts upon his soul as he perceives a human habitation in a place so bleak and wild! But when, on entering the monastery, you see men clad in a holy habit, who welcome you with marks of the deepest interest, who hasten to refresh you, to warm you, to procure for you every kind of comfort that your condition requires, who treat you according to the nicest rules of courtesy, or rather according to the most delicate and generous instincts of Christian charity, a religious veneration fills your soul, and overwhelms you with delight and gratitude!

It is here especially that Religion nourishes by works those sentiments of true fraternity which ought to unite all mankind. At St. Bernard, travellers are welcomed with the same cordiality, without distinction of country, state, religion, or wealth : the wants of humanity are there the first titles to the favours of hospitality. And yet there is no neglect of the regard due to the merit, rank, or dignity of individuals.

These generous hospitallers do not limit their charity to the kind welcome that they give within doors. They go out to meet travellers, and provide for them along the way. The great quantity of snow which in one night blocks up a passage, the whirlwinds, the mists, the severity of the cold, are the chief causes of the fatigues, the dangers, and sometimes the sad fate to which travellers are exposed.

To help them on their journey, two religious descend the mountain every morning, one on the Italian, the other on the Valais side. They go about three miles to a little house built of stone, and called

the *Refuge*. It is here that travellers must look out for them, in order to cross the dangerous mountain. In this crossing, which takes place from November till May, and even for a longer time, the religious are accompanied by a servant, called a *marronnier*, and a dog, carrying round its neck some bread and wine to restore the travellers. This service of charity entails great risks; and it is regarded as the effect of a special protection that the number of religious and servants who fall victims to their devotedness is comparatively small.

It is true that they are greatly aided by the dogs. These wonderful animals, of extraordinary gentleness and strength, are endowed with such correct instincts that they never lose their way. The most experienced religious go astray in snow-storms; but the dogs, never. Without them the service of the mountain would be impossible. The religious have only to follow the faithful animal to be on their way, through mists and storms, to discover the distressed travellers.

When, at an appointed hour, the *marronniers* and the religious have not returned, others go out in search of them. If they do not suffice to bring the travellers, one of them comes and gives notice at the convent. Immediately other religious throw themselves out into the snow, and, helped on by large staffs, hasten to the rescue. This they do as often as they are warned of any distress, either by the *marronnier*, or by the dog which retraces its steps, or by any vigorous pioneer who can reach the convent.

Having come to the travellers, these good religious rouse their courage, lead them along, make the way easy for them with much pain to themselves, and carry them in turn on their shoulders if there is any need to do so. Benumbed with cold, and exhausted with fatigue, the travellers are sometimes obstinate in wishing to lie down and sleep a while on the snow. This would be a treacherous sleep, bringing on torpor and death. They must be pushed, shaken, compelled by force to walk on, or at least to make some movements that will keep up the circulation of the blood. The religious have also to preserve themselves from being frozen; and, for this purpose, besides the exercise that they have in exercising the travellers, they strike their hands and feet with great force against their staffs.

The occasions of the most dreadful accidents that travellers meet with are the avalanches, which, falling with the quickness of lightning, bury them under mountains of snow. At the first sign of such a calamity, the religious and servants set out from the monastery with sounding lines, shovels, pickaxes, and other instruments, to clear away the heaps of snow and to deliver the victims. If

they are not very far down in the snow, the dogs scent them out and show the place where they lie. To find those who are down a great way, the religious run a long iron pole into the snow here and there. The kind of resistance that they meet with informs them whether there are any human bodies below. When they come across some, they immediately set about removing the snow, and they have often the happiness of finding again, with a breath of life still in them, some poor men on the point of expiring. They carry them to the convent, warm them, restore them to consciousness, and administer to them everything best calculated to revive them.

Notwithstanding the watchfulness and the activity of these generous guardians of human life on the summit of the Alps, few years pass without some travellers perishing, either through the descent of an avalanche, or from going astray, or of sheer exhaustion. This last accident occurs especially to those who, in bad weather, attempt to pass the mountain at unusual hours, when they cannot rely on the help of the religious. All the dead bodies that are found are carried to the convent. Religious obsequies having been performed for them, the bodies, covered with a shroud, are ranged in a little square building, raised on the rock a few steps from the convent. There, the corpses, which never dissolve, waste away gradually under the action of the air, and may be recognised for a long time afterwards.[1]

Cases of death are happily rare; but it too often happens that travellers, even without their knowledge, have the extremities of their hands and feet frozen. The religious, who easily understand their state, are careful to keep them away from the fire on entering the convent, and to warm little by little the frozen members: they pursue this cure diligently, and even make such amputations as are absolutely necessary.

The same care is lavished on all the sick delayed at the monastery. They are waited on day and night, and supplied with proper medicine and food: every kind of temporal and spiritual aid is affectionately given them. The sick remain there sometimes for several months, and are entertained *gratis*. Thus are all travellers treated, whether rich or poor, foreigners or natives.

The other occupations of the religious include the canonical office, which they say with edifying regularity: they have a small but very pretty church, in which one is surprised to find beautiful marble pillars. They zealously exercise the functions of the holy ministry, as well in the convent for the benefit of travellers and

[1] In 1851, we saw some corpses, preserved from thirty to fifty years, in the very position in which they had been found under the avalanche

many of the Faithful who go up there from the adjoining valleys out of devotion, as in a number of the Valais parishes which are under their direction.'

What spirit founded and maintained for the last eight hundred years an establishment of which we vainly seek a model or anything approaching thereto in the annals of the world? Protestants! philanthropists! was it yours?

Meanwhile, St. Bernard of Menthon, full of days and merits, died at Novara, May the 28th, 1008, aged four score and five years.

The heroic devotedness of the religious of St. Bernard was an expiation for the disorders that had afflicted the Church; but these disorders were so great that new victims, it would seem, became necessary to appease the wrath of Heaven, and to secure for the Spouse of Jesus Christ a perfect triumph over the devil. The Lord did not fail to provide them. At this very moment appeared St. Romuald, the founder of the Camaldolese. Among all the religious congregations that are the joy of the Church, the ornament of the monastic life, and the admiration of the Christian world, by the austerity of their practices and the sanctity of their lives, that of the Camaldolese holds a front place. The holy religious composing it observe all that is most rude and severe as well in the cenobitical as in the hermitical life. They embrace the penance and mortification of both, without admitting any of the things that are calculated to moderate their privations.

As we have said, the founder of this Order was St. Romuald, of the illustrious house of the Dukes of Ravenna. He was born in this city in the year 956. Scarcely had he come to the use of reason when he abandoned himself to those vices which are so apt to seize on the hearts of young people. He yielded thereto with so much the less restraint as an ample fortune supplied him with the means of satisfying his desires. But God, who had destined Romuald to be one of the consolers of His Church, and the instrument of the conversion of a great many sinners, never forsook him. A salutary remorse continually disturbed the young sinner in the midst of his irregularities, and prepared him for repentance.

O abyss of mercy! A new fault was the occasion of which God made use wholly to burst his chains. Sergius, the father of Romuald, had had a dispute with one of his relatives. He challenged him to a duel, and required that his son should be his second in this horrible affair. Romuald, shocked at such a proposal, refused; but, his father threatening to disinherit him, he consented to assist at the combat as a mere spectator. Sergius

[1] *Anecdotes Chrétiennes*, p. 171.

killed his adversary. Romuald, then twenty years of age, was horrified. Looking on himself as guilty of the crime of murder, he hastened to expiate it by a rigorous penance of forty days in the monastery of *Classi*,[1] near Ravenna. It was here that he renounced the world for ever, by taking the religious habit.

After seven years spent in this holy house, he retired to the neighbourhood of Venice, and took as his director a holy hermit named Martin, under whose guidance he perfected himself in the practice of all monastic virtues. His father, touched by grace, entered a monastery himself, and died there in the odour of sanctity, after having done great penance. As for Romuald, the more he advanced, the more exemplary became his virtue. To the most painful manual labour he joined rigorous fasts, perfect recollection, and continual prayer. He loved this last exercise so much that he was deeply grieved when he saw anyone praying with signs of tepidity. "It were better," he would exclaim, "to say only one psalm fervently then a hundred negligently."

The Emperor Otho III., having come to Italy, was publicly guilty of a twofold crime; but God drew good from evil. Romuald, whom the Emperor had chosen to be his confessor, represented to him all the enormity of his conduct, and imposed on him a public penance. The Prince humbly submitted. Romuald's remonstrances also made a most deep impression on a favourite of the Emperor's, who had been an accomplice in his master's crimes. He consecrated the remainder of his days to penance, and received the monastic habit from the hands of our saint. His conversion was followed by that of many other nobles of the court, who all embraced the same kind of life, under the direction of Romuald.

What joy for the Church to see young lords and princes despise all human grandeur, and consecrate themselves to God in obscurity! Here they tasted the purest delights in the practice of the most severe penance. Their time was divided between prayer, the chanting of psalms, and manual labour. Everyone had his own particular employment: some tilled the ground, others applied themselves to different trades, thus earning their bread in the sweat of their brow.

Romuald, who could no longer accommodate his disciples, built several monasteries. The most celebrated was that of Camaldoli, situated near Arezzo (Tuscany), in a valley of the Apennines. This valley was given to Romuald by a lord named Maldoli, and

[1] This name, which it still bears, comes from *classis*, a fleet, which the Romans kept near that place, to defend the frontiers from the peoples of the North.

hence the monastery took the name of Camaldoli.[1] The saint adopted the rule of St. Benedict, but he added some new observances to it, and wished that his disciples should be both hermits and cenobites at the same time. Such was the origin of the Order of the *Camaldolese.*

A short distance from the monastery of Camaldoli, the hermitage built by the saint is still to be seen: it is on a mountain all covered with firs and watered by many springs. The very sight of this solitary place leads the soul to recollection and contemplation. At the entrance of the hermitage stands a chapel, dedicated to St. Antony. Here it is, always open, like an outpost on the frontiers of this holy land, in order that strangers may purify themselves in it by prayer before going farther.

Next come the cells of the porters. A few steps more, and we meet a large church, richly adorned. Over the door is a bell, whose sound is heard through the whole desert. The cell occupied by St. Romuald, while he was forming his hermitage, is on the left of the church. All the cells are built of stone. Attached to each is a little garden, surrounded with a wall, and also a chapel in which the hermits can say Mass. They are permitted to have a fire, on account of the excessive cold that always prevails on the mountain.

All these solitaries are governed by a superior whom they call the Major. The whole hermitage is surrounded by a wall, beyond which none of those who dwell there can pass: they have leave to walk only in the woods of their enclosure. Whatever is necessary for them is sent up from the monastery in the valley, so that there may be nothing to interrupt their contemplation. The hermits go to the church to recite the divine office, without being prevented by rain or snow. They never speak in community places. They also observe a profound silence in Lent, on Sundays and Festivals, on Fridays, and other days of abstinence. It is, moreover, forbidden them at all seasons to speak between Complin and Prime of the next day.

Once again, what a consolation for the Church to see men living like angels clothed in mortal bodies! What a powerful example to draw sinners from the love of creatures! Lastly, what a counterpoise to the crimes of the world are so many virtues and austerities practised by men who were formerly rich, and in a position to enjoy all the pleasures of life.

The Order of the Camaldolese has produced a multitude of saints and illustrious personages. It was hence that came forth, in our own

[1] Camaldoli is an abbreviation of *Campo Maldoli.*

days, Pope Gregory XVI., whose prudence, solicitude, and profound wisdom were so much needed by the Church in the troublous times through which we have had to pass.' As for the holy founder, he continued his austerities to a great age. He wore a rough hair-shirt, and refused his senses whatever might flatter them. He took no seasoning with the herbs that he ate, and, when anything better prepared than usual was brought to him, he would say meekly, "O gluttony, gluttony! thou shalt not touch this; thou knowest that I have declared perpetual war against thee." At length he died, more than a hundred years old, and in the manner that he had foretold twenty years previously: this was in 1076.[2]

These great saints, springing up in the fertile field of religion, the purification taking place in morals, the ancient faith resuming its early vigour, made the heart of the holy Spouse of the Man-God thrill with joy; but this joy, so pure and sweet, was given her only to prepare her for new afflictions.

In those days the Church received a severe wound from Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers. This innovator was so bold as to deny the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist. A cry of indignation rose on all sides: it mounted even to Heaven, and the most amiable Defender of our mysteries appeared. Berangerius, convicted of error, retracted what he had advanced, and died in the communion of the Church. It was he that in his last moments said, "Yes, I have great confidence that God will regard my tears and forgive me my own sins; but the sins that I have made others commit—will He forgive me them? Will not the souls that I have led astray meet me at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge, and demand my condemnation?" He died in these perplexities. Oh, how proper is this example to inspire us with the utmost fear of scandal!

The great defender of the Real Presence against Berengarius was the celebrated Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury. Born at Pavia, in Lombardy, he studied law and eloquence at Bologna. He then passed into Normandy, where he was appointed Prior of the monastery of Bec. It was here that he opened his school, which soon became the most celebrated in all Europe. He proposed to have a conference with Berengarius in the hope of bringing him back to sound doctrine, but the proposal was not accepted. The courageous defender of the dogma of the Eucharist did not remain

[1] See the Lives of the Saints of the Camaldoli Order, in Italian, by Razzi. 2 vols. quarto.

[2] Hélyot, t. V., p. 258.

idle. He wrote against the heresiarch, and confounded him in a work styled, *Treatise on the Body and Blood of the Lord.* He assisted at several councils which were held against Berengarius, and did not lay down his arms till he saw the error wholly defeated and its author restored to the bosom of unity. Lanfranc died in the odour of sanctity on the 28th of May, 1089, and was buried in his church at Canterbury.

Another cause of sadness to the Church in those days came from the East. Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, nourished the seeds of schism sown by Photius in the minds of the Greeks. This time again they were crushed; but henceforth it might easily be seen that the Greek Church, holding only by the weakest ties to the Latin, would not think much of breaking altogether with her mother. This deplorable schism was not, however, consummated till a good while later on, as we shall see. The Mahometans, becoming more and more terrible, also afflicted the Church in the East, by torturing the Christians of Egypt and Palestine;[1] but there was a new people going to console her.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having watched so carefully over our spiritual and corporal wants. Grant us the grace to love tenderly that Church which has given birth to such a number of Religious Orders so useful to the world.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will be kind to poor strangers.*

LESSON XXXVII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (ELEVENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church consoled and indemnified: Conversion of the Hungarians. The Church afflicted: Wars of the Nobles. The Church consoled: Truce of God. The Church attacked: Saracens in the East, in Africa, in Italy. The Church defended and consoled: Crusades; Foundation of the Carthusians.

To console the Church, and to indemnify her for the losses that she had sustained by the heresy of Berengarius, the schism of Michael Cerularius, and the invasion of the Mahometans, we have said that God was about to grant her a new people: it is again from the

[1] Fleury, l. VIII *et suiv.*

North that they come. For several centuries these vast countries had been giving to the Church her most faithful children. Yesterday it was the Poles, the Normans, the Russians; to-day it is the Hungarians. Nothing less: the children of those Huns so terrible who, in the train of Attila, frightened the world in the sixth century, wish in their turn to become meek and gentle lambs under the crook of the Divine Shepherd.[1] In the eyes of the enlightened man, the conversion of the Hungarians, like that of the other Northern peoples, is a miracle of the first order, which of itself alone proves the divinity of Christianity.

Equalling in rudeness the Normans, the Hungarians probably surpassed them in cruelty. They used to eat raw flesh and to drink blood: they would cut into pieces the hearts of their prisoners, and take them as medicine. Since the time of Attila's ravages, they had often desolated Germany, Italy, and Lorraine, everywhere leaving traces of their frightful cruelty behind them. They burned churches, massacred Priests at the foot of the altar, and led away into captivity a countless number of Christians, without regard to age, sex, or rank. Yet the Christian Religion was powerful enough to sweeten the temper of these barbarians, and to inspire them with sentiments of humanity and virtue!

God, wishing to convert them, touched the heart of one of their kings named Geysa, and gave him dispositions so favourable towards Christians that he ended by receiving Baptism with all his family. An apostle as soon as a neophyte, the pious monarch earnestly desired to banish paganism from his states. One night God sent him a dream, in which he saw a young man of wondrous beauty, who said to him, "Thy design shall not be executed by thee: thy hands are stained with human blood. But thou shalt have a son, who will accomplish thy purposes. He shall be of the number of the elect of God, and, after reigning for a time on earth, shall reign for ever in Heaven."

In effect, the king had a son, whom he named Stephen, and who was baptised by St. Adalbert, Bishop of Prague. This young prince, carefully brought up, gave extraordinary marks of piety from his childhood, and became in course of time the apostle of his subjects. No sooner had he ascended the throne than he concluded a treaty of peace with the neighbouring peoples, and occupied himself wholly with the establishment of Christianity in his states. To render his efforts successful, he distributed abundant alms and prayed with great fervour: he was often to be seen in the church,

[1] See Joseph Assémani, *Comment. in Calend.*; De Guignes, *Hist. Générale des Huns.*

prostrate on the pavement, offering up to God his sighs and tears. He sent everywhere in search of evangelical labourers. He himself accompanied the preachers, and discharged the functions of a missionary. The conversions that he wrought were innumerable. The blood of martyrs having flowed in many places, the evangelical seed throve so rapidly that the holy king had the consolation of seeing idolatry disappear entirely from his kingdom.

To give proper consistence and form to the Church of Hungary, it was divided into ten bishoprics, of which the metropolis was Strigonia on the Danube. a holy religious named Sebastian was placed here as Archbishop. The king sent an ambassador to Rome, begging the Sovereign Pontiff to confirm all the foundations of bishoprics and monasteries that he had made, and *to confer on him the title of king.*[1] The Pope granted him what he asked, and sent him a rich crown, to which he added a cross, that he permitted him by special privilege to have carried at the head of his army, as a sign of the apostleship to which his zeal had urged him in the midst of his subjects. Hence comes the title of *Apostolic*, which is borne by the kings of Hungary. A civiliser of his people, because he was their apostle and their model, St. Stephen wished to secure the fruit of his labours by placing his kingdom under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, towards whom he had a tender devotion. He renewed this consecration some time before his death, which occurred on the Feast of the Assumption, 1038.

With a few exceptions, of which we shall speak later on, the whole West was Christian. The savage nations of the North now rested like gentle sheep in the fold of the Church. Civilisation, the daughter of Faith, had everywhere followed the Cross of the Saviour, and the sacred standard was uplifted far beyond the limits of the ancient Roman Empire.

To make of all these peoples, who had become Christians, but one family, there remained one abuse to be grappled with—the last fruit of the original barbarism of so many warlike hordes. The lords, great and little, whose strongly fortified castles crowned the hills from one end of Europe to the other, had recourse too frequently to arms in order to avenge their real or imaginary wrongs. Like vultures that, from their lofty homes among the crags, sweep down on the valleys to carry off their prey, these men as yet untamed descended at every turn from their threatening towers and fell on the lands adjoining their own. No longer was anything to be heard of but burned and ruined castles, wasted crops, murders, and tears!

[1] Miceslas, Duke of Poland, who had embraced Christianity in the year 965. also begged the same Pope Sylvester to confirm to him the title of king.

Christian charity was violated, and the poor inhabitants of the plains suffered much from these continual battles. Kings were too weak to put a stop to so many disorders. The Church, the common mother of all classes, came to the aid of society, and neglected no means of removing this abuse. Fearing lest she should not succeed if she asked for peace in absolute terms, she proposed a truce on certain days. It was commanded in several councils, under pain of excommunication, that all lords and knights should cease hostilities from Wednesday evening till Monday morning, and during all Lent and Advent.

The last days of the week were consecrated to this truce rather than the others, in memory of the mysteries thereon accomplished: the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, and the passion, burial, and resurrection of Our Lord. This touching law received the beautiful name of the *Truce of God.*[1] The most zealous preachers of the Truce of God were St. Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, and the Blessed Richard, Abbot of Verdun. How many perhaps among those who ridicule monks and insult the Church are indebted for the benefit of their existence to the Truce of God—the work of monks and the Church!

Behold, then, the Divine Spouse of the Man-God extending her mantle, the Chaste Dove of Calvary extending its wings, over all Europe! Peace reigns among Christians; morals are purified; social institutions are deeply penetrated with the spirit of Christianity; great men shine on the throne and in the cloister; Christian Europe is full of life. Everything bespeaks the approach of a solemn epoch, an epoch of great events.

In effect, a wonderful war is going to break out: the East and the West will rise against each other. The Mahometans or Saracens, called forth by God to punish guilty Christians, as the Assyrians of old to punish prevaricating Jews, forget their mission, and wish to exterminate the Christian people, whom they have orders only to keep to their duty by salutary corrections. Under the leadership of their caliphs, they take possession of a great part of the East. After subjugating Africa, they pass into Spain, infest the Adriatic Sea, make themselves masters of Calabria, and threaten the rest of Europe, carrying with them what they have carried everywhere—corruption, slavery, and barbarism. Jerusalem had just fallen before them. The Holy Sepulchre, the cradle of the religion and civilisation of the world, was in their hands: yet a little while, and the whole earth should become the prey of Mussulmans.

But God, who said to the sea, "Thus far shalt thou come, and

[1] See Ducange: *Treva Lei*

here, against this grain of sand, shalt thou break the pride of thy waves," knew how to oppose a barrier to the wild torrent. It was a Priest who first of all pointed out the danger. At his voice, all Europe rose like one man. The Crusades were decided on. The first was approved of by acclamation. We call Crusades those wars undertaken, in the middle ages, to reconquer the Holy Land, occupied by the Saracens. Whoever engaged therein took as the sign of his engagement a red stuff cross, worn on the right shoulder. It was this that gave such persons the name of *Crusaders*, and the wars *Crusades*. Of these wars we count six principal ones.

Before relating their history, it will not be amiss to make known the influence which they exercised. Now, it is acknowledged in our days that the Crusades had these results:—

1. They put an end to private wars, which the lords used to wage against one another in France and Germany, in England and Italy: wars ever recurring, thinning the nobility, crushing the people, and drawing in their train robbery, murder, and other most odious deeds.

2. They gave rise or at least increase to commerce with foreign peoples. The Crusades, it is true, took away large sums of money to Asia, but they caused much larger sums to flow into Europe. By exercising Europeans in navigation, the Crusades urged them on to attempt long voyages, brought about the invention of the compass, and prepared the way for the discovery of America.

3. They contributed very much to the spread of knowledge in the West, especially in France. With a view to convert the Saracens and the schismatics of the East, the Popes wished that schools should be established for teaching Arabic and other oriental languages. Rome, Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca had able masters: maintained at Rome by the Holy See, at Paris by the king, and in the other cities by the Prelates, monasteries, and chapters of the country. Independently of their lectures, they were obliged to translate into Latin the valuable works written in the languages which they taught.

4. They gave liberty to the poorer classes. By declaring that all men are brethren, Religion had fixed in minds the principle of universal liberty—a wise, reasonable, necessary liberty, which excludes neither power nor subordination; but continual revolutions bursting on the world had not permitted the Church to deduce all the consequences of this principle. True: millions of men already enjoyed liberty; yet a great many others were still waiting for it. The Crusades came. Before setting out for the Holy Land, the lords are to be seen granting freedom to their serfs, in order to have

the money required for the expedition. Others make a vow to set them free, if success in war crown their efforts, or if Providence bring them home safe.

5. They sweetened the lot of Eastern Christians. Even after these fell again under the sway of the Saracens, they were no longer exposed to the same insults and injuries.

6. The Crusades drove back the Mussulman power into Upper Asia, and rendered it for a long time unable to attempt anything of importance against Europe.[1]

We have said that it was a Priest who first drew attention to the danger that threatened the West from the Saracens. This Priest, whose name has become so celebrated, was called Peter the Hermit. He belonged to the diocese of Amiens. Having made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he was deeply afflicted to see the sacred places profaned by infidels. He conferred with Simon, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, on the matter, and in their conversations they conceived the design of delivering Palestine from the slavery under which it had so long groaned. Peter, on his return, went to the Pope, Urban II., and drew for him such a touching picture of the state to which the Christians had been reduced that the Sovereign Pontiff sent him from province to province in order to stir up both princes and peoples to make a great effort for the deliverance of their oppressed brethren. Peter seemed at first sight ill suited for the management of so important an affair.

He was a small man, not of very pleasing countenance. He wore a long beard and a coarse habit; but under this humble exterior were hidden a great heart, a fiery enthusiasm, an heroic courage, and a sprightliness and energy of thought which enabled him to convey, in a flood of eloquence, his own feelings into the souls of those to whom he spoke. His life, poor and most austere, gave him a new degree of authority. He bestowed on others anything better than usual that he received, ate nothing but bread, drank nothing but water: and all this he did with that unaffected and judicious piety which became a genius of a high order.

Pope Urban appointed a council to be held at Clermont, whither many princes congregated. He himself spoke therein so emphatically, that all present burst into tears, and cried out with one voice, *God wills it, God wills it!* These words, which everyone repeated as if by inspiration, seemed a happy augury, and became afterwards the war-cry of the Crusaders. All France, Italy, and Germany were soon in motion. Great and little showed the same eagerness

[1] See Michaud, *Hist. des Croisades*, and the Italian work, *Apologia de secoli barbari.*

to take up the cross. What was most edifying was that private enmities and wars, kindled in most of the provinces, suddenly ceased. Peace and justice seemed to have returned to the earth, in order to prepare men for the Holy War.

France, so plainly destined to defend the Church, and to propagate the Gospel, distinguished itself among all nations. It had the honour of giving the leader of the Crusade: this was Godfrey of Bouillon. To the prudence of manhood and the ardour of youth this hero joined the valour of a knight and the piety of a saint. The expedition set out, crossed a portion of Europe and Asia, took Antioch, and encamped before the walls of Jerusalem.

The city could resist for a long time. The Saracens had neglected no means of putting it into a state of defence; but the Crusaders wrought prodigies of valour, and, at the end of five weeks, they took it by storm—on a Friday, at three o'clock in the afternoon. This last circumstance was remarked as corresponding to the day and hour of Our Lord's expiring on the cross. In the first flush of victory, nothing could hold back the soldier: the infidels, of whom the city was full, were put to the sword, and the massacre was horrible. But in a little while this transport of fury gave place to sentiments of the most tender piety. The Crusaders laid aside their blood-stained garments, and went, barefooted and striking their breasts, to visit all the places consecrated by the sufferings of the Saviour. The few Christians that had been left in Jerusalem shouted with joy, and returned thanks to God for having delivered them from oppression.

Eight days afterwards, the princes and lords assembled to elect a king capable of defending this precious conquest. The choice fell on Godfrey of Bouillon, who was the most valiant and virtuous man in the whole army. He was led to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and there solemnly proclaimed. A golden crown having been presented to him, the pious hero refused it. "God forbid," he said, "that I should ever wear such a crown in a place where the King of Kings wore only a crown of thorns!"[1]

At the moment when the Christian peoples had decided on marching against the infidels, angels of peace and prayer had taken the way of solitude, in order to obtain victory for their brethren; or to expiate the disorders inseparable from those distant expeditions; or to oppose a counterpoise to the heresies that were still afflicting the Church; or to wipe away the tears that the heresy of Berengarius had just caused the Church to shed; or, in fine, to perpetuate the true spirit of Christianity and to teach all generations to serve

[1] See *Dict. hist.*, art *Pierre Damien*: *Hist. abrégée de l'Eglise.*

God in spirit and in truth. At this time was established the Order of the Carthusians, the most perfect of all, since it has never had any need of a reform. Let us leave the tumult of the camp, and recollect ourselves before visiting the wondrous scenes of solitude.

The founder of this celebrated Order was St. Bruno. He was born at Cologne about the year 1060. His parents, commendable for their piety, thought well to bring him up under their own eyes: the young Bruno made rapid progress in learning and virtue. Appointed theologian and chancellor of the diocese of Rheims, whither he had gone to finish his studies, he saw his reputation spreading far and wide, and bringing to his ears the most flattering applause. But he never felt vain of the gifts of God; on the contrary, he employed them to extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Impelled by grace and the desire of a more perfect life, he resolved to quit the world. He confided his project to six of his friends, and invited them to accompany him: two of them were canons of St. Rufus, in Dauphiné. "Solitude will not suffice for us," said St. Bruno, "if we have not a man enlightened in the ways of God to guide us." "In our country," answered the two canons, "we know a holy Bishop whose cares are all to save the world by penance; and he has in his diocese a great many woods, deserts, and rocky places, almost inaccessible to men."

This Prelate was St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble. Bruno, delighted at the discovery, went off with his six companions to find the man of God. Having reached Grenoble about the feast of St. John the Baptist in the year 1086, they fell at the feet of St. Hugh, and begged him to grant them a place in his diocese where they might serve God without being a burden to men, and far away from intercourse with the world.

At the sight of these seven unknown travellers, the holy Pontiff recollected a vision that he had had the preceding night. It seemed to him that he saw God Himself building a temple in the desert of his diocese called the *Chartreuse*, and that seven stars, which rose out of the ground and took the shape of a crown went before him as if to show him the way there. He immediately applied the vision to Bruno and his companions, embraced them tenderly, and proposed to guide them himself to the desert of Chartreuse.

Nothing more proper than the appearance of this solitude to elevate the soul and to engage its powers: the terrible and sombre beauty that everywhere meets the eye would convince even an atheist of the existence of God. It would be enough to bring him here, and to say to him, *Look around you!* A deep valley, girt by bleak, rugged rocks, and covered during the greater part of the year with snows and mists: such was the cradle of the Carthusians.

To render the valley, if possible, still more lonely, St. Hugh forbade women, huntsmen, and shepherds from approaching it. Overjoyed at finding a place such as they desired, entirely secluded from the rest of the world, Bruno and his companions began by building an oratory, and little cells at a short distance from one another, as in the ancient Lauras of Palestine. Who can describe the admirable life led by these angels of the earth in their solitude? They bound themselves to perpetual silence, in order to have no conversation but with God. They spent a great deal of their time in singing His praises. After prayer followed manual labour. The most ordinary kind thereof was the transcription of pious books, so as to earn a livelihood, without being a burden to any person. With hardly a trifle of difference, such is at this day the life of the Carthusians.

They fast eight months of the year. On Sundays and Festivals they take their meals in common. On other days their portion is sent to them: everyone receives it through a little window that opens into his cell, and they eat alone like hermits. Prayer, reading, and manual labour are their usual occupations. Every religious has a little garden attached to his cell, which he cultivates himself. All rise about ten o'clock at night to recite the office. Towards three they take a little rest, and rise again at five or six. They never lay aside the hair-shirt. They sleep without undressing: a simple straw mattress serves them as a bed.

Perfectly calm in the midst of a noisy world, whose echoes seldom reach their ears, they pray unceasingly for their brethren, and act as lightning-conductors for society. Earthly angels, living in mortal flesh as if without it, they represent John the Baptist in the desert, and form the chief ornament of the Spouse of Jesus Christ. They are eagles that take their flight towards Heaven, and justly is their Order preferred to all others.[1] Here, especially, is preserved in all its purity the true spirit of the Gospel. We shall cite only one example:—

The Saviour said, *He that will be first among you, shall be your servant.*[2] This expression, supported by the example of the God who pronounced it, changed the thoughts of men regarding power. In Christianity, splendid offices and employments are called *charges:* not vainly so. The number of Saints, that is to say, of true Christians, who have refused, or accepted with trembling, the dignities offered them, is very great. The number of those who have died the victims of their charges, is perhaps greater; since, for them, the exercise of power was but a long martyrdom, a devotedness by day and night to the interests of their inferiors.

[1] Bona, *De div. Psalmodia*, c. xviii. [2] *Matt.*, xx, 27.

This eminently social manner of regarding greatness is that which prevails among the Carthusians. In their language, so truly philosophical, because so truly Christian, it is said that a prior asks *mercy* when he asks to be discharged from his superiority; it is said that *mercy is done him* when he is not continued in such office, and that *mercy is not done him* when he is continued in it.[1] Oh, how much we have forgotten this Christian idea of power! Hence, see what rivalry! what intrigues! what meannesses among the great, and what misfortunes on the people!

Models of the virtues which we have just sketched, and living in Heaven rather than on earth, is it surprising that the Carthusians behold the approach of death with a holy joy, and that the funeral of one of their brethren is more like a festival than anything else? When a Carthusian dies, he is shaved, washed, and clothed in his best attire. His hands are joined on his breast, and he is given a little cross. Before the office, he is carried to the choir and placed in his stall as if he were still alive. The moment of burial having arrived, all the brethren salute him as if to warn him of his departure. Then two of the religious, taking hold of him under the arms, convey him along, preceded by all the others chanting the prayers of the Church, to the place of burial. He is lowered gently into the grave. His cowl is then drawn over his face, and the Abbot throws on him the first shovelful of clay. The religious next come forward, and do as their Abbot has done. Then every one of these angelic men, holding in his hand a bouquet of the prettiest flowers in his little garden, throws it into his brother's grave, as a souvenir of friendship, and a touching emblem of the virtues of the deceased.

Six years after the foundation of the Chartreuse, the Sovereign Pontiff, who had been a disciple of St. Bruno, made him come to Rome. The humble religious obeyed, notwithstanding the great regret that he felt in quitting his dear solitude. However, the life of the world was so much opposed to his tastes that, after sojourning for some time at the pontifical court, he besought the Pope to let him return to the desert. The Holy Father ended by giving his consent; but he would never agree to the Saint's leaving Italy. Bruno retired therefore into the mountains of Calabria, where he founded a new monastery.

At length the time arrived when God should reward the labours of His servant. Perceiving the approach of death, Bruno gathered his religious round his bed, and made before them a public confession of his whole life, and a profession of his Faith. He declared

[1] Dict. de Trévoux.

that he believed all the mysteries of Religion firmly and unhesitatingly. He expatiated more fully on the Eucharist, by reason of the heresy of Berengarius, which had lately disturbed the minds of the Faithful. The following Sunday, October 6th, he surrendered his soul to God, not having yet attained the fiftieth year of his age: this was in 1101.[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having raised up so many Saints to keep Faith and Morals alive in the world: it was for us that Thou didst do so. Grant us the grace to profit by so many benefits, and to imitate the models that Thou hast given us.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often say to myself, If a Saint were in my place, what would he do?*

LESSON XXXVIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES.)

The Church afflicted: Sacred Fire or St. Antony's Fire. The Church consoled: Foundation of the Order of St. Antony of Vienne. The Church attacked: Saracens in the East. The Church defended: Knights of St. John of Jerusalem or Knights of Malta. The Church afflicted: Leprosy. The Church consoled: Knights of St. Lazarus. The Church attacked: Scandals and Errors. The Church defended and consoled: St. Bernard.

The history of the Church is, properly speaking, only the history of the divine action in protecting Christian truth, and in propagating it despite all obstacles. Many a time already have we had occasion to remark that God always places the remedy beside the evil, consolation beside suffering. To heresy, He opposes Apologist Saints and Orders; to scandals, Contemplative Saints and Orders; to public calamities, Infirmarian Saints and Orders. The eleventh century will present us with some new proofs of this immutable law of Providence.

While the Christians of Europe were hurrying to the East in order to help their oppressed brethren, a terrible disease broke out suddenly in France and several other countries of the West. This disease, which no one was able to explain, and which the people always called the *Sacred Fire, St. Antony's Fire*, or *Hell Fire*,

[1] See Hélyot, t. VII, p. 367

made its ravages chiefly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries The mysterious evil began with a black spot, which spread rapidly, caused a dreadful heat, dried up the skin, and rotted the flesh and muscles, which separated from the bones and then fell off in shreds. A devouring fire, it sometimes consumed its victims in a few hours. The limb attacked became black and dry; it generally putrified, and occasioned unspeakable pain. The plague raged so fiercely that in a few years it swept away thirty millions of people.

A gentleman of Dauphiné, named Gaston, Lord of La Valloire, had an only son named Guerin, who was attacked by this terrible disease. The father exhausted all the resources of medicine for the cure of his son; but in vain. He then had recourse to St. Antony, whose protection he had himself experienced in a dangerous illness. He humbly besought him to obtain the restoration of his son's health, and promised that, if heard, he would consecrate both himself and his son, with all their property, to the relief of poor persons attacked by the Sacred Fire, and to the lodging of those pilgrims who came from all parts to implore the intercession of him whose very name, as St. Athanasius says, made the devils tremble, and whom God had given to Egypt as a sovereign physician.

Gaston had no sooner ended his prayer than he fell asleep. St. Antony appeared to him, and reproved him for showing more eagerness to obtain health of body than health of soul for his son. "Nevertheless," added the Saint, "God has heard your prayer: fulfil therefore your promise. You and all those who consecrate yourselves to the relief of the sick, mark yourselves with a blue-coloured tau." He showed him the figure of it with the end of his staff, which he planted in the ground. Immediately the staff seemed to grow green, and to send out branches, which covered the whole earth, and which a hand, coming forth from heaven, blessed. The tau is a capital letter—T: it is the sign with which it is said in the Apocalypse that the foreheads of the elect will be marked. It has a close resemblance to a cross, or rather it is exactly of the form of a cross.[1]

On his return, Gaston found his son out of danger, and informed him of his vision and of the promise that he had made. The son approved of his father's resolution. Without further delay than was necessary to set their domestic affairs in order, they departed for the town St. Antony, there consecrated their goods and persons to the service of the sick poor, and built near the church a hospital to receive them. It was on the 28th of June, 1095, that Gaston and his son laid aside their worldly dress in order to clothe them-

[1] See our *Histoire du bon Larron*.

selv s with humble, black habits, marked with a blue tau on the left side. So charitable a resolution was soon known in the surrounding castles. Eight other personages, distinguished by their rank and their virtue, came to join them. These ten men, having bid an everlasting farewell to the world, originated the Order of the Antonines, one of the most celebrated and useful, as well as long-lived, since it subsisted till the eighteenth century. As long as the horrible affliction lasted which it was commissioned to solace, this heroic Order let a great portion of Europe feel the effects of its tender charity.[1]

The Church, happy in having relieved her children that dwelt, so to speak, under her wings, did not forget those that lived in the most remote provinces of the East. The Saracens and Turks, like cruel wolves in pursuit of their prey, were roaming round the fold of Jesus Christ. To-day they fall on one Christian country, to-morrow on another, putting all to fire and sword, killing the men and leading away the women and children into captivity. In order to raise round His dear flock a barrier impassable to these ferocious beasts, the Lord spoke to the hearts of some of those noble warriors whose valour had won Jerusalem, and inspired them to devote their lives and property to the defence of Christian populations. These renowned heroes formed themselves into religious bodies: of which we count thirty. The most illustrious was that of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, afterwards called the Knights of Rhodes and Knights of Malta, when those two islands had become the place of their abode and the scene of their exploits.

The Blessed Raymund du Puy, a native of Dauphiné, the second Grand Master of the Order, gave the rules which served as statutes for the Knights, and which embraced the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience: this was about the year 1118. It would be too long to relate the splendid feats of arms that shed so much lustre on the Order of St. John of Jerusalem: we shall confine ourselves to one.

In 1565, Soliman II., Emperor of the Turks, one of the most dreadful enemies of Christianity, resolved to take the island of Malta, defended by the Knights. The whole Ottoman army, numbering more than a hundred thousand warriors, on board a fleet of a hundred and fifty-eight galleys, eleven large ships, and a dozen other transports, suddenly appeared before Malta. During the space of four months the city was attacked with incredible ardour,

[1] Hélyot, t. II, p, 110; and *l'Abbeye de Saint-Antoine*, by a Priest of *Notre Dame de l'Osier*, octavo, 1844.

and was still more valiantly defended by the Grand Master, John de la Valette, and his knights. This great man had a confidence in God equal to his coolness.

One Sunday, while he was at Vespers, the news reached him that the Turks had made a large breach in the walls and were beginning to mount them. "Go on with Vespers; when they are done, I will go and see," was the only answer of the Grand Master. In effect, the office over, he went to the threatened place, achieved prodigies of valour, and drove back the enemy. During the siege, the infidels lost more than twenty thousand men, and there were seventy-eight thousand cannon shots fired at Malta, which had no other ramparts than the breasts of the heroes who defended it. The city was totally destroyed; but the Grand Master repaired all, and built a new city, which was called *Valette City.* This work completed, the worthy Grand Master died with as much piety as he had shown courage and prudence throughout the course of his life.

Europe resounded with the fame of so great a victory. The Emperor Charles V. sent to the Grand Master a golden sword enriched with precious stones. Every year, in thanksgiving for the deliverance, a solemn procession took place at Malta, on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the day of the raising of the siege. The Grand Master was there at the head of all the Knights. In his suite was a Knight, who carried the standard of religion; on his left, a page who carried the drawn sword sent by Charles. At the beginning of the Gospel, the Grand Master took the sword from the hands of the page, and held it erect during the reading of the divine book, in order to show his readiness, as well as that of all the Knights, to fight in defence of the Faith.

The Order of Malta was divided into languages: the languages were the different nations of which it was composed. It reckoned eight: Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Germany, Castile, and England. It held lands in all these provinces, whose revenues were spent in the war against the infidels, and in the relief of the poor, for the Knights were first instituted to assist the distressed pilgrims of the Holy Land. They always preserved the spirit of their institute; and Christian Europe saw, during many ages, these bravest of the brave, the flower of the nobility, spend their lives on battle-fields, or near the pillow of the sick in hospitals, or at prayer in their cloisters.

It was always a Grand Cross Knight that was Grand Hospitaller, in order to make sure that the sick were properly cared for. He had always as helpers some Knights, good and true men, charged to dispense medicines. The Grand Hospitaller and these overseers likewise took care of abandoned children, whom they

brought up at the expense of the common fund, to the age of eight years. The Grand Master took the title of *Guardian of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, and the Knights called the sick and poor *Our Lords*.[1]

Attendance on the sick and prayer were, in times of peace, the occupations of the Knights. But, at the first alarm, they took up again their swords, and rushed in the twinkling of an eye whithersoever their presence was needed. As terrible on the field of battle as they were gentle towards the sick, these truly Christian heroes wrought prodigies of valour. Then, when the trumpet summoned them from the conflict, they went, still covered with gore and dust, to thank at the foot of the altar that God who gives victory, and to hang from the arches of His temple the flags won by their

[1] Michaud, *Hist. des Croisés*, t. V, p. 239:—

We have seen that St. John the Almoner called the poor his *Masters*. Born of Christianity, the idea expressed by these words has never been lost in places where the true spirit of Christianity has been preserved. Out of thousands of examples, we shall content ourselves with citing some of the regulations of the hospital of Noyon, refounded and completed, in 1218, by Bishop Stephen of Nemours. They were transferred according to the text into the rules drawn up in 1233 and 1248, by proper ecclesiastical authorities, for the hospitals of Amiens and Beauvais.

"Art. 34. Antequam infirmus recipiatur, peccata confiteatur, et, si necesse fuerit, religiose communicetur; postea ad lectum ducatur, et ibi, *quasi dominus domus*, quotidie antequam fratres comedant caritative reficiatur; et *quidquid in ejus desiderium venerit*, si tamen inveniri poterit, quod non sit contrarium ei, secundum posse domus ei quæratur, *donec sanitati restituatur*. Et ne quis sanitati restitutus, pro nimis festina recessione recidivum patiatur, *septem diebus in domo sanus*, si voluerit, sustentetur.

"Art. 35. Infirmi *nunquam sint sine vigili custodia*."*

Where can we find better arrangements than these, which make the poor sick man the lord and master of the house into which he is received; which impose on the religious an obligation of not taking their own frugal refection until they have provided for all his wants; which secure him day and night the attendance of charitable and devoted guardians; which, in fine, give him a right to remain in the hospital, not only till his cure is effected, but also during the time necessary to fully establish his convalescence? And, as a guarantee of the strict observance of these rules—the expression of all the thoughtful tenderness of Christian charity—the monks and nuns of St. Augustine add to the ordinary vows the following engagement: *I offer and dedicate my soul and body to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. John the Baptist, to St. Augustine, and to all the other Saints of Paradise, for the service of the poor members of Jesus Christ: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* (Spicil., t. XII, p, 60).

* *Spicileg.* de D. L. d'Archéry, t. XII, p. 54 et 68; t. XIII, p. 335, édit. in-4o.—Before the sick man is received, he is to confess his sins, and, if necessary, to make a pious communion. Let him then be taken to bed, and there, *like the master of the house*, let his food be every day kindly served up to him before the brethren; and *whatever he takes a fancy for*, provided it can be had and will not be injurious to his health, let it be procured, according to the means of the house, *until he is well*. And for fear of a relapse, in case he should quit the house too soon, let him be kept on *for seven days after his recovery*, if he wish it.—The sick *shall never be left without a careful attendant*

bravery. Besides the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Knights made another: they swore never to count the number of their enemies, never to turn round their head in battle, and, whatever was the danger, always to march on.

Let us mention some of the ceremonies that used to accompany their reception. The twofold spirit of strength and sweetness which characterises the Christian Religion is here manifested with a splendour and simplicity that cannot be sufficiently admired. The postulant, clothed in a long dark robe and a short cloak, placed himself on his knees at the foot of the altar, holding in his hand a white taper lighted, and a drawn sword to be blessed by the Priest. He had prepared for his reception by a general confession and the Holy Communion.

After reciting several prayers and sprinkling some holy water on the sword and the Knight, the Priest returned the sword to him, saying, *Receive this holy sword, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. Make use of it for your own defence and that of the holy Church of God, to the confusion of the enemies of the Cross of Jesus Christ and of the Christian Faith; and take care, as far as human frailty permits, never to strike anyone unjustly.* The sword is then returned to its scabbard, and the Priest, placing it by the side of the Knight, says, *Gird on this sword in the name of Jesus Christ, and remember that it was not so much by arms as by their great faith that the Saints conquered kingdoms.*

The Knight, then drawing the sword from the scabbard, was told, *This sword, by its flashing brightness, denotes faith; by its point, hope; by its hilt, charity. Make use of it for the Catholic Faith, for justice, for the consolation of widows and orphans. This is the true profession and justification of a knight: since sanctification consists in offering the soul to God, and the body to dangers, for the service of God.*

The Knight, receiving the drawn sword, brandished it three times, and was told, *These three times that you have brandished the sword in your hand signify that, in the name of the Holy Trinity, you are to meet all the enemies of the Catholic Faith with the hope of victory. May God give you grace to do so! Amen.* All these prayers and admonitions have such a deep meaning, that it will be permitted us to enter into some details regarding them. The power of the sword is the most terrible that men know. Religion, before intrusting it to any of her children, wishes to have them understand well in what spirit, for what end, and in what cases it is to be used. Where else shall we find more instructive ceremonies, more touching lessons?

Then golden spurs were shown to the Knight, and he was

addressed thus: *Do you see these spurs? They inform you that, as the horse fears them when he neglects his duty, so you ought to fear quitting your rank and vows to do evil. It is golden ones that are put to your feet, because gold is the richest of metals and a symbol of honour.* At the same moment a Knight comes forward and fastens them to the new member's feet.

The receiver then took the cloak of the Order, and, showing the new member the eight-pointed cross attached to the left side of the cloak, said to him, *This cross we wear white as a sign of purity. You ought to wear it inside as well as outside your heart, without spot or stain. The eight points are a sign of the eight beatitudes that you ought always to possess within you, which are,* 1, *to be spiritually content;* 2, *to live without malice;* 3, *to bewail one's sins;* 4, *to be humble under injuries;* 5, *to love justice;* 6, *to be merciful;* 7, *to be sincere and clean of heart;* 8, *to suffer persecutions. These are so many virtues that you ought to engrave on your heart for the consolation and preservation of your soul. And therefore I advise you to wear this cross, sewed on the left side, over the heart, and never to cast it away.*

The receiver then made the Knight kiss the cross, and, putting the cloak on his shoulders, said to him, *Take this cross and cloak in the name of the Holy Trinity, for the salvation and rest of your soul, for the increase of the Catholic Faith, and the defence of all good Christians, for the honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I place this cross on your left side, near your heart, that you may love it well and with your right hand defend it, commanding you never to renounce it, for it is the true banner of our Religion. This cloak with which we have clothed you is a figure of the garment, made of camel's hair, with which our patron St. John the Baptist was clothed in the desert; and therefore, in taking this cloak, you renounce the pomps and vanities of the world. Wear it during the time marked out for you; procure also that your body may be buried in it.*

On the cloak were fastened, in white stuff, all the ornaments of the Passion. Wherefore, the receiver said to the Knight, *That you may place all your hopes for the forgiveness of your sins in the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, behold a figure thereof in this cord with which He was bound by the Jews. This is the crown of thorns. This is the pillar to which He was bound. This is the lance with which His side was pierced. These are the baskets for giving Him alms in the poor, and with which you will beg for Him, when your own goods do not suffice. This is the sponge which bore Him a draught of vinegar and gall. These are the scourges with which He was beaten. This is the cross on which He was crucified. I have placed it on your shoulder in memory of the Passion, wherein you will find the rule of*

your soul. This yoke is exceedingly sweet and light, and hence I bind your neck with this cord as a sign of the servitude promised by you. The cord was of white or black silk.

Thus, from head to foot, the religious knight read on his garments his duties, his promises, and his sublime vocation. He could not make a step or cast a look on himself without being reminded of the great holiness and valour which ought to distinguish him. For so much devotedness, what rewards were promised him?

The receiver informed him in these terms: *We make you and all your relatives participators in all the spiritual goods now and hereafter belonging to our society throughout all Christendom.*[1]

These valiant knights, who, during so many centuries, held up their noble breasts as a living rampart round Christendom, procured for the Church the repose needed in order to labour for the sanctification of her children, and to continue her journey towards Heaven: she profited of it.

The twelfth century opens, an age of fervour and glory, in which the twofold genius of Faith and Charity covers all Europe with splendid masterpieces, with noble asylums of prayer and virtue. In the previous century there were twenty religious congregations established; now more than forty are going to immortalise this beautiful period of the middle ages. Why should we not speak of so many wonders, so proper to make the heart of everyone beat high who still feels in his veins some drops of Christian blood? Let us confine ourselves to a few.

To attend the sick and to defend Christians: this was the end of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem; it was also that of the Knights of St. Lazarus. But there was one class of sick persons to whose relief the latter were specially devoted, namely, lepers. In the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, leprosy, brought from the East by the Crusades, extended its ravages over a very great portion of the world. This disease would suddenly attack all parts of the body, and dry them up in a little time. Physicians called it a *general canker.*

"The flesh of the leper," say the old histories, "comes to such a degree of insensibility that one may pierce with a needle his wrist, his feet, even his sinews, without causing him any pain. His hair may be pulled off without removing the corrupt flesh that has nourished it. His eyes are red and swollen; his ears, eaten away with ulcers. The gristle of the nose is putrid. The tongue is dry, black, inflamed. The skin is rough, uneven, scaly, furrowed like that of an elephant; hence the name *elephantiasis.* If it is pierced.

[1] Hélyot, t. III, p. 79 *et suiv.*

there issues forth from it a thin, purulent matter. The nose, the toes, the fingers, and sometimes the larger members, fall off, and anticipate by their death that of the sick man. In this state, the body of the leper presents a frightful sight, and gives forth an insupportable smell. His disease is such that it may be regarded "as the last stage of the corruption of the human body in this life."

Add to this picture the danger of contagion, and you will see what a tribute of admiration is due to those infirmarians who freely devoted themselves to the relief of such a fearful malady.

Sublime idea of charity! Not content with devoting themselves to creatures whom society rejected with horror, some colleges of Piriests clothed them with their own habit, raised them to the dignity of religious, and called them by the name of brethren. *Venerabiles fratres infirmi!* say the ancient titles of the priory of Mont-aux-Malades, near Rouen. They permitted them to sit in their chapter, and to join in the election of the prior. At the hour of meals, they yielded to the lepers the best of the meats, and humbly took for themselves whatever was left. When we reflect on the general disgust that was inspired by lepers, we must admit that this last trait takes its place beside whatever is most heroic in the annals of sanctity.

The horror inspired by lepers was so great that everyone shunned them. They were banished far from dwelling-houses;[1] and sometimes those living corpses were to be seen wandering about

[1] The ceremonial of the separation of lepers was one of the most touching in the ecclesiastical liturgy. The Priest, after celebrating Mass for the infirm, put on a surplice and stole, gave holy water to the leper, and then led him to the lazar-house. He exhorted him to patience and charity, after the example of Jesus Christ and the Saints. "My brother, poor dear child of the good God, by suffering much sadness, tribulation, sickness, and other adversities of this world, one comes to the kingdom of Paradise, where there is no sickness, no adversity, but all are pure and clean, without spot or stain, brighter than the sun, whither you shall go, please God; but on condition that you be a good Christian and bear this trial patiently. May God give you grace to do so. For, my brother, such a separation as this is only corporal: as to the spirit, you always remain as free as ever you were, and will have a share in all the prayers of our holy Mother the Church as if you were daily present at the divine service along with the others. And as for your little wants, good people will provide for them, and God will not forsake you. Only take care to have patience: God is with you. Amen." After this consoling address, the Priest had to fulfil the painful part of his ministry. With a trembling voice, he pronounced these terrible legal prohibitions:—

"1. I forbid thee ever to enter a church, or a monastery, or a market, or a mill, or a procession, or the company of the people.

"2. I forbid thee to appear out of thy house without thy lazar-dress, so that thou mayst be known, or to appear barefooted.

"3. I forbid thee ever to wash and anything that thou wearest at

in crowds through the country. If they perceived anyone, they were obliged to warn him of their presence by means of a rattle, that he might betake himself to flight. Abandoned by all the world, a prey to the most dreadful sufferings, these poor wretches courted death as a favour.

God had pity on their miseries. Religion, in her maternal

a bank or a fountain, or to drink there; and if thou wish to drink some water draw it in thy own barrel or thy own porringer.

"4. I forbid thee to touch anything that thou sellest, or that thou buyest, until it is thine own.

"5. I forbid thee to enter any inn. If thou desire wine, either by buying it or by having it given thee, let it be poured into thy own barrel.

"6. I forbid thee to dwell with any other woman than thy wife.

"7. I forbid thee, if thou walk along the roads and meet any person that speaks to thee, to answer before thou hast placed thyself away from that side whence the wind is blowing.

"8. I forbid thee to walk by any narrow lane, so that, if thou shouldst anywhere meet a person, he may not be the worse thereof.

"9. I forbid thee, if thou go through any passage, to touch a well or the rope, unless thou hast put on thy gloves.

"10. I forbid thee to touch children or to give them anything.

"11. I forbid thee to eat or drink from any other vessels than thy own.

"12. I forbid thee to eat or drink with any other persons than those of thy own sort."

Then the Priest took some cemetery clay, and, spreading it over the diseased man's head, said to him, "Die to the world; be born again to God! . . . O Jesus, my Redeemer, Thou hast formed me of clay, Thou hast clothed me with a body: grant that I may return to life on the last day!"

These words are painful to a man that has lived in the midst of the world, and that sees his holiest affections broken, his noblest hopes destroyed. Hence, the leper remained motionless: his life disappeared, and his look bore some resemblance to that of a departed Christian. The people sang, "All my bones were shaken, my soul was troubled, *alleluia*. Lord, show us mercy and grant us health!" The Priest read the Gospel of the Ten Lepers; then, after blessing the habit and the poor furniture of the lazar-house, he presented everything to the leper. In giving him the habit, which was called a *housse*, he said, "My brother, receive this habit, and wear it as a sign of humility: I forbid you to leave your house henceforth without it. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

In giving him the barrel:—

"Take this barrel for receiving whatever is given thee to drink, and I forbid thee, under pain of disobedience, to drink from rivers, fountains, or common wells; also, to wash thyself there in any manner whatsoever, or thy clothes, or anything that has touched thy body."

In giving him the clacker:—

"Take this clacker as a sign that it is forbidden thee to speak to anyone but those of thy own kind, except through necessity, and, if thou have need of anything, ask it with the sound of this clacker, by drawing to thee people from afar and on the lee side."

In giving him the gloves:—

"Take these gloves, by which it is forbidden thee to touch with thy bare

charity, persuaded some fervent Christians, some young lords, to face the perils of contagion in serving the lepers. These heroes, such as paganism and heresy never formed and never will form, were the Knights of St. Lazarus. But let us admire how far Religion carried her solicitude for these poor sufferers!

hand anything except what belongs to thee, or what is not to pass into the hands of others."

In giving him the wallet:—

"Receive this wallet, to place therein whatever is bestowed on thee by good people, and remember to pray to God for thy benefactors."

A leper should have a *tartarelle*, shoes, stockings, a camelina robe, a *housse* or habit of rough cloth, a camelina hood, two sets of curtains, a barrel, a funnel, a leather strap, a knife, a wooden porringer, a bed stuffed with *coutte*, a bolster and a coverlet, two pairs of sheets, a hatchet, a small box with a lock, a table, a stool, a light, a straw mattress, a jug, some plates or bowls, a basin, and a pot for cooking meat. All these common articles were blessed and sanctified by the prayers of the Church. The Priest, taking hold of the leper by his robe, introduced him into his cell. The leper said, "This is the place of my rest for ever; here shall I dwell: it is the object of all my desires." Then, opposite the door, was erected a wooden cross, to which a box was fastened for receiving the alms offered by the faithful pilgrim in exchange for the prayers of the sick solitary. The Priest first of all made his offering; then all the people followed his example.

After this ceremony, uniting so many feelings of sadness and hope, the Faithful returned to the church, preceded by the grand processional cross. Then all fell prostrate, and the Priest, raising his voice, sent up to God the following prayer: "O Almighty God! who, by the patience of Thine only Son, didst crush the pride of the old enemy, give to Thy servant the patience necessary to support the evils with which he is overwhelmed. Amen." All the people answered, "Amen, so be it!"

Thus were the sick poor of the good God separated from society. Happy if they had virtue and resignation; for they were then regarded in every country as very exalted personages in the moral order! Exiled on earth, removed from all the illusions that charm life, deprived of all the human supports that give so much ease to life, the habitual state of the leper was one of meek and humble sadness. But we, who no longer have faith, cannot understand all that Christian piety did for suffering: it carried benefits to the farthest bounds of misfortune. Religion and nature are treasures of sublime enjoyments to those members of the human family whom the world disinherits. In the middle ages, a leper was honoured as a confessor of the faith: the most affectionate names* were sought out for this man whom Heaven consoled mysteriously. The Supremely Faithful Friend did not abandon the poor outcast, but let him taste an inward joy, without any mixture of trouble: so true it is that happiness is to be found only where there is something of Heaven.

* They were called the sick of the good God, the dear poor of the good God the good people, &c. At Easter the lepers could come forth from their tomb, in memory of the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have seen a leper's tomb in a little church near Dijon. It is here that one may form a right idea of the costume and some of the furniture of these poor creatures. M. Maillard de Chambure, known by his zeal for the antiquities of Burgundy, has obtained a place in its archives for a very large and correct drawing thereof. (*Histoire de Saint Francois d'Assise*, par Emile Chavin, ch. ii.)

Lest there should not be for these unfortunates—the sight of whom was so repulsive and the approach to whom was so dangerous—all the tenderness, all the attention, all the care possible, she inspired a thing almost incredible: *the Grand Master of the Order of St. Lazarus, established for the relief and cure of lepers, should be a leper!* The object of this provision was that, experiencing or having experienced himself all the pains of leprosy, he might have a greater sympathy for his companions in misfortune, and might cause them to be served with more care, zeal, and tenderness If this is not maternal love, what is? Could Religion be more ingenious, or the charity of the knights go further in the alleviation of human misery? Does not the Grand Master of St. Lazarus, who should himself bear the infirmities that he was called upon to relieve in others, imitate, as far as can be done on earth, the example of Our Lord, who was pleased to espouse all our infirmities in order that He might be more sensible of, and more compassionate towards, them?

This fundamental rule of the Order of St. Lazarus gave rise to a question unique in the annals of history. Obliged to leave Syria about the year 1253, the knights addressed themselves to Pope Innocent IV., and said, "Since our foundation, it has been a law among us to elect as Grand Master a leprous knight; but we cannot now possibly do so, as the infidels have slain all the leprous knights of our hospital in Jerusalem. We beg you to permit us to elect in future, as Grand Master, a knight who is in good health."

What will the Vicar of Jesus Christ answer? He does not venture to decide whether it is better to let the Order perish than put an end to the miracle of charity of which it has given an example, and he sends to the knights the Bishop of Frascati, that the latter may grant them the permission, if it be shown on mature examination that such can be done according to God.[1] Is it not true that, were such deeds to be found among the Greeks or Romans, they would have been recorded in pages of prose and verse, which we should have learned by heart from our tender childhood? But because they are to be attributed to our ancestors in the Faith, because they were inspired by Religion, they are condemned to oblivion, they are shamefully ignored!

God, who provided so efficacious a remedy for leprosy, did not forget the spiritual evils of his children. Now, in those days, when Europe was continually passing to and from the East, the fervour of a great many began to grow cold. Concupiscence, encouraged by scandal, threatened to destroy the work of the redemption in the

[1] See Hélyot, t. I, p. 282.

moral man, by degrading the affections of his heart with sensible things.' What else shall I say? Heretics dared to raise their heads and utter blasphemies. To cure all these evils, to give a new spur to piety, to make virtue flourish again, to confound heresies, in a word, to secure victory for the Church, God drew forth from the treasures of His mercy a man, one single man,—so powerful are the weakest instruments in His hands! This man was St. Bernard.

A model of virtue, an apostle of truth, the king of his age, St. Bernard was born at the castle of Fontaines, near Dijon. Scarcely had he arrived in the world when his pious mother consecrated him to the Lord. This maternal consecration, too seldom imitated, soon bore its fruits. While yet young, Bernard loved to be alone. Docile, affable, modest, kind towards all, most charitable towards the poor, he advanced in grace before God and man as he advanced in years. The favour that he asked of God with most earnestness was never to sully his baptismal innocence. One day he happened to cast his eyes on a dangerous object: he immediately punished himself by plunging into a frozen pond up to the neck. This temptation let him understand how many dangers there are in the world; henceforth, he thought only of the means of quitting it. However, he still felt some irresolution. In order to overcome it, he had recourse to prayer; and, his mind at length made up, he informed his relatives.

His family were at first opposed to his design; but he pleaded his cause so well that he obtained the desired consent, and even moved his brothers to follow his example. On the day appointed, they all came to the castle of Fontaines to bid their father farewell and to ask his blessing. They left with him their young brother Nivard, to be the consolation of his old age. Adieu, my little brother Nivard, said the eldest to him; you alone shall have all our goods and lands. What! answered the child with a wisdom beyond his age; you take Heaven, and leave me the earth: the division is unequal! However, they went on their way, leaving Nivard with their father; but, some time afterwards, he quitted the world and joined his brothers.

Bernard, and thirty young lords whom he had gained to Jesus Christ, took the road to Citeaux, a celebrated abbey of Benedictines,

[1] But if our ancestors committed great faults, they repaired them so nobly that we are tempted to say with the Church, O happy fault, *felix culpa!* The history of the middle ages is full of those solemn reparations. St. Theodorus, Paul de Laraze, Lomellini, Visconti, Henry II. of England, and a thousand others, measure by their penance the interval that separates us from the Ages of Faith. (See Eccles. Hist.. and *Cor. a Lap. in Matt.*, iv, 17.)

out with special observances. Hence, the Order of Citeaux or the Cistercian Order is regarded as the second branch of the Order of St. Benedict.[1] St. Robert, a native of Champagne, was its founder. Citeaux was about fifteen miles from Dijon, in the diocese of Châlons. Before the arrival of the religious, it was a wild deserted place, covered with trees and briers, and watered by a small river: it is supposed that the name *Citeaux* was given it on account of the *cisterns* or ponds found there.

The religious began by clearing this tract, and dwelt in wooden huts. Nothing poorer or more edifying than their life. Fame soon spoke far and near of these new miracles of the desert; and—how surprising!—the Cistercian Order, fifty years after its establishment, counted five hundred abbeys. Eighty years later on, it had more than eighteen hundred. The first four daughters of Citeaux were Ferté, Pontigny, Clairvaux, and Morimond. The whole Church of Jesus Christ was filled with the fame of the sanctity of the new religious like the sweet perfume of a divine balm. There was no country, no province, to which this blessed vine did not extend its branches.[2]

It was therefore to Citeaux that Bernard and his companions went. They all fell prostrate at the door of the monastery, humbly begging to be admitted. St. Stephen, who was the Abbot, received them joyfully, and gave them the habit. Bernard was then twenty-three years old. Having entered solitude that he might be forgotten by the world and might lead a life hidden in God, he used to excite himself to fervour by often saying to himself, "Bernard, why hast thou come hither?" Faithful to the grace of his vocation, he soon became an example for all his brethren.

Meanwhile, the number of the religious having increased very much, the Count of Troyes offered to found a new monastery. Bernard was sent with twelve of the religious to begin this great undertaking. Let us accompany them on their journey, and we shall learn how the Gospel conquered and civilised the world. The pious colony, having Bernard at its head, and preceded by the cross, set out from Citeaux to the chanting of psalms. Escorted by Angels and protected by Saints, the new conquerors marched on for several days. At length they halted in a desert called the *Valley of Wormwood*, in the diocese of Langres. This desert was surrounded by an immense forest, which afforded a retreat to numerous bands of robbers. Here they planted their cross, and laid down their travelling staffs. After taking possession of this uncultivated land, in the name of Jesus Christ, they broke up a

[1] The Order of Cluny is the first. Hélyot t. V, p. 347.

portion of it and built themselves little cells. Who can recount their toils and privations? Many a time they were reduced to the last extremities; but He who feeds the birds of the air never abandoned His servants.

The inhabitants of the country, astonished at their virtue, came to their aid, and helped them to build a monastery. Soon the entire place was changed. This frightful desert became a smiling meadow. This dark forest, which lately resounded with the roars of beasts and the shouts of robbers, no longer heard aught but the accents of prayer. More than five hundred religious sang here uninterruptedly, by day and night, the praises of the Lord. They tilled their lands themselves, and supported a multitude of poor. The monastery and the valley took the name of Clairvaux, that is to say, celebrated valley: celebrated, indeed, by the change that had just been wrought in it—celebrated by the angelic virtues of its new inhabitants—celebrated by the presence of St. Bernard, the greatest man and the greatest Saint of his age.[1]

The reputation of the Abbot of Clairvaux soon burst over the limits of the desert in which he had buried himself. All the nations of Christendom fixed their eyes on him. Consulted by kings and Popes, who referred the most important matters to his decision, he was the soul of all the counsels and all the great enterprises of his age. It was he that confounded the errors of Abelard, and of Gilbert de la Porée, Bishop of Poitiers; it was he that preached the second crusade; it was he that put an end to the schism dividing the West; it was he that defended, with an eloquence equal to his piety, the august prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin. A statesman and a missionary, he travelled, in the interests of peoples and of the Church, through a great portion of Europe, and preached in France, Italy, and Germany. His works, his eloquence, his zeal, his virtues, have made him be

[1] Clairvaux is now a prison. Its inhabitants are the *monks of philosophy*. The chief works of St. Bernard are :—

1. His Homilies on the Gospel *Missus est*. We find herein the most pious thoughts imaginable on the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Blessed Virgin.

2. His Book on *Consideration*, addressed to Pope Eugenius, who had been his disciple. All the duties of ecclesiastical superiors are herein set forth. The same may be said of the book on the *Duties of Bishops*.

3. Sermons for the whole year.

"The discourses of St. Bernard," says Sixtus of Sienna, "are full of sweetness and energy. His language is like a well of milk and honey. His heart is a furnace, whose burning affections inflame the reader." The best edition of St. Bernard is that by D. Mabillon, Paris, 1690, republished by the care of Gaume Brothers in 1840.

called the last of the Fathers of the Church. At length, sinking under his merits, this man of miracles died at Clairvaux, in the sixty-third year of his age. He wished to be buried in front of the altar of the Blessed Virgin, for whom he had always entertained a most tender devotion. On the 20th of August, 1153, Heaven counted a new inhabitant.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having watched so carefully over the wants, even the temporal wants, of Thy children. Grant us the charity of the Hospitallers of St. Lazarus, and the devotion of St. Bernard towards the Blessed Virgin.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will daily say a "Memorare" for the sick.*

LESSON XXXIX.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (TWELFTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church attacked: Heresies and Scandals. The Church consoled and defended: Contemplative Orders; Conversion of Pomerania. The Church threatened from the North: Prussians. The Church defended: Teutonic Knights. The Church threatened from the South: Saracens. The Church defended: Military Orders of Calatrava, Alcantara, and Avis. The Church afflicted: Slaves in Africa. The Church consoled: Orders of Redemption and St. John of Matha.

The devil, jealous of the happiness of the Church, raised up during the twelfth century a very large number of sectaries, who, by their errors and their absurd and superstitious practices, tended to disfigure the beauty of Religion, to alter the Faith, and to destroy the spirit of the Gospel. To all these works of darkness God opposed works of light, namely, the Contemplative Religious Orders. While expiating scandals and disorders, the consequences of error and superstition, they perpetuated in all its purity the true spirit of the Early Christians, and saved society by preserving immutably the holy practices of the Gospel. Their monasteries were so many schools in which one found again the true spirit of Catholic piety and learned the proper manner in which God wishes to be honoured. Among these congregations, the most celebrated was that of Fontevrault, founded by the Blessed Robert d'Abricelles, wherein were educated for a long time the daughters of our kings.

Not only did God console the Church by preserving for her in monasteries a great many children worthy of their mother, but He gave her new ones to replace those whom error had seduced. Let us pass on to Germany, and there, walking in the footsteps of a zealous missionary, we shall behold the conquest of a new people.

At this time lived St. Otho, Bishop of Bamberg, in Franconia, a prelate equally commendable for his intelligence, his eloquence, and his zeal for the salvation of souls. Boleslas, Duke of Poland, having conquered a large province of the North—Pomerania—he besought the Saint to come and instruct its idolatrous inhabitants in the truths of Christianity Otho set out eagerly, accompanied by several evangelical labourers. The pious troop wended their way across Poland and Prussia, and, after many fatigues, arrived in Pomerania. The chief of the country received baptism in 1120, with most of his subjects. Overjoyed at the sight of this rich harvest, the holy Bishop founded churches, ordained priests, and wisely provided for the different wants of the new converts.[1]

In the North, there still remained a nation to be brought under the yoke of the Gospel, a new nation, namely, the Prussians. But for it the hour of grace had not yet come. In the meantime, God took care to secure His Church against the incursions of this ferocious people. An Order of military religious was placed here as a living rampart: it was called the Teutonic Order, or the Order of Our Lady of the Germans, one of the most powerful that ever came into existence. It possessed at one time, in full sovereignty, Royal and Ducal Prussia, Livonia, and the Duchies of Courland and Semigal, which were very extensive.

Its origin was the same as that of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. In the East, during the Crusades, some German nobles formed themselves into religious bodies for the defence of Christians and the relief of the sick. But the Knights of the Teutonic Order soon passed into the West. They went and placed themselves on the frontiers of the North: it was civilisation fighting against barbarism! Their vows were the same as those of the Knights of St. John. Their daily food was bread and water. A straw mattress served them as a bed. A large blue cloak, ornamented on the left shoulder with a white cross, was their dress. It was necessary to be a German by birth that one might be admitted into the Teutonic Order. These heroes, so truly deserving of the name, were for a long time the bulwark of Christendom on the

[1] Bolland., t. I. *Julii*, p. 349.

North. Thanks to their valour, the Prussians, a ferocious people, who revived all the barbarity of the Normans and Hungarians, were held in awe and rendered unable to injure the Church.'

Thus, while the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and of St. Lazarus were protecting Christendom on the East, the Knights of the Teutonic Order were defending it on the North. To surround the Church as a fortress, it was only needed to extend this living rampart along the South, for the West was secured by the ocean. The Divine Pastor took care to provide for this, and His dear sheep rested in peace.

Masters of Africa and a great portion of Spain, the Saracens made frequent incursions into the lands of the Christians. At the very moment when kings were powerless to repel them, God raised up in Spain and Portugal three Religious Orders, which should become the terror of the infidels and the bulwark of the Church on this side. These Orders were, in Spain, those of Calatrava and Alcantara, and in Portugal that of Avis.

They had almost the same rules as the other Hospital and Military Orders. That of Calatrava owed its foundation to a memorable circumstance. The Saracens, having assembled a large force, were preparing to take Calatrava, one of the strongest and most beautiful cities of Spain. The King of Castile, Don Sancho, announced throughout his states that if any lord would undertake the defence of this place, he would make him a present of it, and it should pass to his heirs; but there was no reply from anyone, so dejected were the minds even of the bravest by the accounts of the formidable army of the Saracens.

Amid this general consternation, a religious of the Cistercian Order, of the Abbey of Our Lady of Fietro, in the kingdom of Navarre, had the courage to go to the king and offer to defend the place. At first he was looked upon as a madman. However, the king agreed to his proposal, and promised to give Calatrava to the Cistercian Order if he should save it from the infidels. The religious did not lose a moment. With the permission of the king and the consent of the Archbishop of Toledo, he set about the establishment of an Order of military knights. Many gentlemen wished to take part in it. At the head of his troop, the new general entered Calatrava in 1158, repaired the fortifications, and filled the city with munitions of war. His name, his ability, his wondrous activity, spread terror among the Saracens, who did not even dare to lay siege to the city.

The military order took the name of Calatrava. During many

[1] Hélyot, t. III, p. 147.

ages it was, with that of Alcantara, the bulwark of Spain. The knights wore short tunics, so as not to be inconvenienced in mounting their horses. Their cloaks were lined with lambskin. Outside they wore a scapular and a red cross, adorned with *fleur-de-lis*. Excepting their swords and spurs, they had no gilding on any of their arms. They slept with their clothes on, so as to be always ready to fight. In times of peace, they rose at a very early hour to make their prayer and to hear Mass. They fasted on Fridays, kept silence in the refectory, ate in common, and practised hospitality towards pilgrims. Everywhere in the middle ages we see a religious spirit united with the military spirit. This twofold spirit produced heroes such as paganism and infidelity never knew. Humility and courage, goodness and strength, greatness, nobility, refinement, generosity: such were their distinctive characteristics.

The military-religious Orders of Spain, that is to say, those of Calatrava and Alcantara, to which must be added that of St. James of the Sword, made a vow to defend the belief of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. These three Orders wished to engage themselves to this vow by a splendid ceremony. Accordingly, they had novenas at Madrid, in three different churches, richly adorned. Every day there was a sermon on the Conception, and a Pontifical Mass. The hours of these various exercises were so arranged that the ceremonies of one church might not interfere with those of another. The knights of each Order assisted thereat in uniform.

After the Gospel of the Mass on the day fixed, all the people being silent, a knight of each Order pronounced aloud in the name of the whole Order the formula of his vow. It ran thus: *I, N. . ., vow to maintain and to defend in public and in private the belief that the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and Our Lady, was conceived without the stain of original sin.* After the noble knight followed all his brothers-in-arms, who, in presence of the celebrant and with hand extended on the Cross and Gospel, repeated the same formula.

Piety towards God, and above all things devotion to Mary, are the sources of charity towards men. Hence, what sweet fraternity among these valiant warriors! I desire no other proof of this than one touching custom which I shall mention. When a knight died, the commander of the commandery nearest the abode of the deceased was obliged, besides having the usual prayers said, to feed a poor man for forty days for the repose of the soul of the deceased! Find, if you can, anything like this outside the Catholic Church!

Notwithstanding the valour and vigilance of the military religious, it happened that the cruel wolves, that is to say, the Saracens, who were roaming round the fold of Jesus Christ, made a passage into it, and carried off some of the sheep. The Moors of

Africa, in particular, carried over in their light-ships, used to land suddenly on the coasts of Italy, France, and Spain, plunder the houses, and carry off the inhabitants into slavery. To tell all that they made them suffer, it would be necessary to describe all their hatred for Christians: an atrocious, inveterate hatred, which a contact of several centuries with civilised peoples had only a little mollified. To form an idea of what it was in the twelfth century, when the Mahometans were in the full swing of their fanaticism, let us hear an account of a Christian slave, who for thirty years experienced the rigours of their slavery, and who was delivered in 1816:—

"The ship that I was put into," he says, "having been wrecked on the coast of Africa, we fell into the hands of the Koubals or Koubaïles, a savage people who dwell in the neighbourhood of Oran. They bound me and my companions, with our arms across, and fastened us to the tails of their horses. Several of us, being thus dragged, fell to the ground through weakness and pain. They led us to their chief, who gives fifty francs for every Christian brought to him. But the Arabs, who have a great love for money, prefer to kill those who are not of their own religion, firmly believing that by this barbarous act they please Mahomet. On we went for eight days: at length we reached Mount Felix. I was quite lame, and my stomach was dreadfully swollen. My comrades suffered as much: three of them died a few days after our arrival. Our clothes were taken from us, and we were given a kind of short petticoat. To refresh us, we were fastened in pairs to a rough chain about ten feet long and sixty pounds in weight.

"Thus laden with iron, we were taken to the prison. This building, which is very long, is like an immense stable. Two thousand slaves are kept in it: it can easily hold two thousand five hundred. The walls are about forty feet high and eight thick. The roof is like ours, only that it is made of planks cut in the shape of slates. It is low in comparison with the length. Though there are a great many windows, closed by large iron bars, well-secured, the prison is very dark.

"These windows or openings let us every night see wild beasts, attracted by the scent of human flesh, for which they are most greedy, sending in through the grate such terrible roars as almost made our hair stand on end. On walls forming a terrace are about sixty sentry-boxes, each of which can hold fifteen persons: these are the abodes of the guards. Always armed, never laying aside their clothes, they often fire their guns charged with coarse salt on the slaves who make a little noise in the prison. They have their

watches like our sentinels, and often warn one another with these words: *Beware of the Christians!*

"Through the middle of the prison, paved at a slant on both sides, runs a stream, which carries off the filth. We were driven into this frightful dwelling-place, and the middle part of our chain was fastened with a padlock to a ring fixed in the wall about a yard above the ground. A little straw was granted us, a stone for a pillow, and leave to sleep if we could, which was not easy, because great numbers of bugs were attacking us. We crushed them with our fists, waking in starts out of our sleep, so that in the morning, my companions and I looking round, we saw ourselves all covered with blotches and black blood. We were stupefied on beholding before us, in two rows, about two thousand men almost naked, with beards of frightful length, most of whom set themselves to drink water out of human skulls, for want of cups.[1]

"Though my wounds were giving me great pain, I should go to work like the rest at six o'clock in the morning, dragging my chain and gathering up some Turkish wheat, thrown to us like dogs, for breakfast, dinner, and supper. You bruise the ears, and eat the flour as best you can, for the guards in the fields do not give you water to moisten it. After drawing a plough all the day with a dozen slaves, I was brought back to the prison at nightfall, completely tired out, in fact almost dead from the blows that I had received, in order to accustom me to the rule of the guards, who always accompany their words with blows.

"When old age no longer permits the slaves to work, the guards shoot them. The same is the case with young people who fall sick and give little hope of recovery. They are thrown out, and are

[1] Shocking as this narrative is, the following remarks, taken from the Liverpool *Catholic Times* of May 24th, 1878, would show that the spirit of cruelty still exists even among people who call themselves Christians:—

"The editor of the *Capetown Mercury*, curious to see how the troops were housing the Caffir prisoners taken in the fighting in South Africa, paid a visit of inspection, and the result is horrifying. There were 262 prisoners altogether; and they were lodged in three iron sheds, each shed measuring 34 feet by 12 feet. Now, such a shed is just capable of containing half a dozen, if health is to be regarded, and the cruelty of packing in nearly ninety can hardly be characterised in fitting terms. Moreover, not one of the hapless wretches was permitted to go outside even for an instant, and they had to stand or crouch, day and night, in a prolonged torture. The food and water were given in tubs, and many were thus deprived of all nourishment by their stronger and greedier comrades. The suffering they had to undergo from hunger, thirst, stifling heat, intolerable stench, and inability to take natural rest, is an indelible disgrace to the brutes who inflicted it, and we are amazed that no one in authority appeared with humanity enough to check a brutality more worthy of Ashantees than of Englishmen." (*Tr.*)

quickly devoured by lions, tigers, leopards, or panthers. These beasts fight with one another for their prey, and their struggles afford much amusement to the Arabs. *Do you see this Christian?* they say: *God does not own him, since He lets him be devoured.*

"It is usually the skulls of men shot that serve as cups for the slaves. One of my companions, having fallen sick, was thus killed: his skull served me for fourteen years. The slaves rise at two o'clock in the morning to avoid beatings, which are very frequent. Some cut down wood, others grub up mountain soil, others again plough. I often went fully fifteen miles to till the ground. Twelve or fourteen of the slaves would there be fastened by straps across the pole of a plough, guided by two of their companions."[1]

The most terrible persecution was not that which made the body suffer or die, but that whose object was to kill the soul, by robbing it of the Faith. The Saracens left no means untried for this purpose. In vain did those unfortunate captives stretch out their suppliant hands towards their brethren in Europe. Either their cries were not heard, or there was no one rich enough, strong enough, bold enough, to run to their rescue. But what no other eye saw, the eye of Religion saw; what no other heart durst attempt, her maternal heart accomplished.

A little child had just been born in the obscure village of Faucon, situated in a remote part of Provence: it was on the 24th of June, 1160. Descended from the illustrious family of Matha, he received the name of John, on account of the day that witnessed his appearance in the world. Scarcely had he left his cradle when he began to show a contempt for all the sports of childhood. At twelve years of age he went to Aix, the capital of Provence, where he applied himself to the study of literature, and to all the exercises usual among nobles. Thence he went to Paris, where he so distinguished himself that he received the degree of doctor in theology. He soon entered the ecclesiastical state, and this was the moment which the Lord chose to make known the eminent sanctity of His servant, and His great designs over him.

John de Matha, having been ordained priest, went to celebrate his first Mass in the chapel of Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris. This Prelate was pleased to assist at it, together with the Abbé of St. Victor, the Abbé of St. Genevieve, and the Rector of the University: all were witnesses of what occurred.

When the new priest was raising the Sacred Host, an Angel,

[1] *Hist. de l'esclavage en Afrique*, duodecimo, by Jean Piérre Dumont, of Lyons, delivered after the bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth, in 1816.—See also *Cinq mois d'esclavage chez Abd-el-Kader*, by M. de France, 1837, and *Vie de S. Jean de Matha*, by Rev. P. Calixte. duod., 1857.

under the figure of a young man, appeared above the altar. He was clad in a white robe, with a red and blue cross on the breast. He had his arms crossed and resting on two captives, as if he wanted to make an exchange of them. The Bishop and the others whom we have mentioned consulted together on this vision. Not knowing what it might have meant, they were of opinion that John of Matha, supported by authentic testimonies of this apparition, should go to Rome in order to inform the Sovereign Pontiff thereof, and to learn from his lips what he ought to do.

The Saint obeyed, though it was necessary for this purpose to do violence to his humility. Accompanied by a holy hermit, he set out on his journey to Rome. One of the greatest Popes that ever ruled the Church, Innocent III., had just ascended the pontifical throne: he received our two pilgrims with much kindness. Having learned from their own statements and the letters of the Bishop of Paris the object of their journey, he summoned a number of Cardinals and Bishops to St. John Lateran's in order to have their opinion. At the same time he ordered solemn fasts and prayers, to the end that he might obtain a full declaration from God, and invited all the Prelates to be present at a Mass which he would say the next day, with the intention of knowing the will of Heaven.

The Pope, accompanied by all his clergy and the two holy travellers, went to the Church in order to celebrate there the august mysteries. During the sacrifice, as he was raising the Sacred Host to show it to the people, the Angel appeared again to the whole assembly, in the same manner and attitude as at Paris. After these wonders, the Pope, no longer able to doubt that John of Matha and Felix of Valois were inspired by God, permitted them to establish in the Church a new religious order, whose chief end should be to labour for the redemption of captives, groaning under the tyranny of infidels. For this purpose, on the 2nd of the following February, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, he gave them the habit himself. He wished it to made up of the same colours as those under which the Angel had appeared, namely, a white robe, on which was fastened in the middle of the breast a red and blue cross; and he gave to this new order the title of that of the *Holy Trinity*. It is also called of the *Redemption of Captives*, because of the end for which it was established.

Laden with apostolic blessings and supported with the most flattering letters, John of Matha and Philip of Valois returned to France. A monastery was built for them on the confines of Brie and Valois, in a place named Cerfroy:[1] this monastery was always looked on as the principal one of the Order. John of Matha, seeing

[1] It is at present restored and occupied by the Trinitarians.

his Order established, immediately set to work. He collected much alms, and, rich in the gifts of charity, he sent two of his religious over to Africa in order to ransom poor Christian captives. What would barbarians think on seeing these men, alone and unarmed, crossing stormy seas and kissing respectfully the chains of their brethren, until such times as they could break them; throwing down gold, without counting it, in order to obtain the release of unfortunate slaves whom they had never seen?

God blessed the two "Redeemers:" in the year 1200 they brought back a hundred and eighty-six slaves. St. John went to Tunis himself, where he had much to suffer; but at length he had the happiness of returning to Europe with a hundred and twenty slaves delivered by his care. How eagerly was the return of the liberator's ship expected all along the coast of the Mediterranean! Scarcely had she come in view when everyone ran to the shore. There were relatives, young and old, with hearts beating high to know the fate of a father, of a husband, of a son, of all that were most dear to them. What a sight! As they embraced the captives, they bedewed them with sweet tears!

While all this was going on, the author of the redemption was stealing away from the blessings of the people, and trying to reach on foot, or mounted on an ass,[1] the nearest monastery of his Order. Hardly recovered from his fatigue, he again took up his staff and calabash; and, to prepare for a new voyage, went about asking alms in all Christian countries. As soon as he had acquired the necessary sum, he passed over to Africa, brought back in triumph the captives whose chains he had broken, and began again to ask alms for the deliverance of those whom he had left behind. Such, with prayer, was the only occupation of his life.

St. John of Matha, blessed by heaven and earth, died at Rome in the year 1213.[2] The Order of the Most Holy Trinity ransomed, at the cost of the most heroic sacrifices, more than *nine hundred thousand captives*. About the middle of the seventeenth century, it already counted more than *seven thousand martyrs*.[3] We have seen that the Angel who revealed the establishment of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity held his arms stretched out over two captives, laden with chains: one was white and a Christian, the other black and an infidel. In our days it has pleased God to put a stop to the slavery of whites on the coast of Africa, but that of

[1] Out of humility, the religious of the Trinity use no other beast.

[2] Hélyot, t. II, p. 320.

[3] The balance-sheet of the different Religious Orders for the redemption of captives may be summarised thus: two hundred and eighty million pounds sterling in alms, one million two hundred thousand Christians set free!

blacks is continued. At the present hour one still sees exposed in the markets of the East poor children sold by their parents, or torn away by craft or violence from the domestic hearth, by heartless traffickers in human flesh.' To fulfil the second part of their mission, it remains for the Trinitarians to procure the liberation of the negroes. This is the great project which they have lately undertaken.

Before his voyage to Tunis, the zealous founder had travelled through Spain, exhorting the Christians to have pity on their brethren enslaved among the infidels. His instructions had such an effect that some virtuous women, seeing that they could not go themselves to redeem the captives, asked to be associated to the religious of the Trinity, in order to help them in their pious designs, at least by prayer. It is thus that, in the Catholic Church, you always see a Moses who prays on the mountain, while Israel fights on the plain. St. John of Matha complied with their wishes and got a monastery built for them. Putting their goods in common, they reserved to themselves wherewith to live poorly, and gave the rest for the redemption of captives.

When we think of all that our ancestors did, how can we regard our own actions as of any value? Do their beautiful examples suggest nothing to us? No, if we have base hearts and selfish minds; for it is only noble hearts that love great things, as it is only lofty minds that comprehend them.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having so well protected the Church against infidels, and for having inspired St. John of Matha and his companions with that ardent charity necessary for the redemption of captives.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will relieve prisoners by alms or by prayers.*

[1] See the very interesting little book, *Suema*, translated from the French by Lady Herbert. On reading it, one may well exclaim that facts are often stranger than fiction. Poor Suema became a nun among the Daughters of Mary in Zanzibar. She died in 1878. (*Tr.*)

LESSON XL.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES, *continued.*)

The Church consoled: Foundation of the Hospitallers of the Holy Ghost; of the Hospice of Albrac; of the Pontiff Religious or Bridge-Makers. The Church afflicted and attacked: Scandals, Errors of Arnauld of Brescia. The Church consoled and defended: Ninth and Tenth General Councils held at St. John Lateran's. The Church attacked: Heresy of the Waldenses. The Church defended and consoled: Eleventh General Council of Lateran; St. Isidore; St. Drogo; Conversion of the Rugians. The Church attacked: Albigenses and Beguards.

THE Church, whose maternal solicitude was arming knights to defend her children against infidels, and encouraging the religious of the Trinity to deliver captives, did not forget those who were suffering in the interior of the fold. *The poor you have always with you,*[1] said the Saviour of the world. Yes; but while Paganism let them die of hunger, Religion fed them, nay, treated them with princely kindness. In the course of the twelfth century, we shall see rising up, as if by enchantment, numerous hospitals for the relief of the different miseries of man, teaching him that he is no longer under the shameful slavery of Paganism, but under the sweet law of Charity.

Among the Hospital Orders that then appeared, we shall name that of the Holy Ghost: Guy, Lord of Montpellier, was its founder. It soon spread, and Innocent III. built a hospital in Rome, the care of which he confided to the religious of the new Order. This monument, worthy of Rome, worthy of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, worthy of the majesty and charity of the Catholic Church, deserves to be known. It consists of several groups of houses, and a hall large enough to hold a thousand beds.[2] At one side, runs a long corridor that can hold about two hundred beds. There is besides a spacious transverse hall, in which the wounded or hurt are placed. Priests and nobles have private rooms: there are four beds in each the sick here are served in silver vessels. Heretics and such as have contagious diseases occupy separate apartments.

In another portion of the hospital are a great many nurses for children, although there are more than two thousand others in the city and neighbourhood to whom they are given out to be nursed.

[1] *Joan.*, xii, 8.

[2] All the halls together contain at present 1616 beds. (Mgr. Morichini, *Charitable Institutions of Rome*, p. 36. and *The Three Romes*, t. II.)

Near this is the department for boys. They are placed here at the age of three or four years, after being withdrawn from the nurses. They always number five hundred. Here they remain till they are old enough to earn a livelihood. Girls, to a like number, are brought up in another department, shut off from the rest, till they are of an age to marry or to become nuns. They are under the management of the Sisters of the Holy Ghost, whose convent is also enclosed within the grounds of the hospital. When they marry, the hospital gives them a dowry of fifty Roman crowns.[1]

The spiritual cares correspond to the temporal. Besides the chaplains of the establishment, the religious orders of Rome depute two of their members every week to hear the confessions of the sick. Pious lay-people make it a duty to go and render to them during life and after death the humblest services of charity.
during life and after death the humblest services of charity.

Near the hospital is the palace of the commander or chief of the Order of the Holy Ghost. Between this palace and the hospital is a large cloister, where the physicians, surgeons, and servants of the establishment, who always exceed a hundred in number, reside. Near this is the department of the religious.

The annual expenses, both for the children and the sick, rise on an average to about forty thousand pounds sterling.[2] Outside the enclosure of the hospital is a turning-box, large and always open, which contains a neat little cushion for receiving abandoned children. They may be laid here without fear in broad daylight. For it is forbidden, under heavy penalties, including even corporal punishment, to inquire who they are that bring them, or to watch which way they return.[3]

Admirable forethought of Catholic charity! With a mother's eye, she saw the consequences of any other conduct. Philanthropy is nowadays thought more enlightened than charity It has done better things: it has banished the turning-boxes, and demanded humiliating acknowledgments. It wants, we are told, to put a stop to libertinism. Folly! it has only multiplied crimes. Every day the children left in churches or on the doorsteps of the rich accuse the imprudence or the barbarity of its laws. No, no; that charity which receives with closed eyes the infant intrusted to it does not encourage libertinism. The daughter of religion, she recommends, like her mother, purity of morals. What impels to libertinism is impiety, is above all the example, unfortunately too common, of

[1] This dowry is at present raised to a hundred Roman crowns, something more than twenty pounds sterling. (Morichini, &c., p. 95.)

[2] It is at present a hundred and twenty-one thousand Roman crowns. (*Ibid.*, p. 45.)

[3] Hélyot, t. II, p. 200.

those same philosophers who declaim against charity, and cast away the turning-boxes.'

You see, and you ought to be proud of it, that religion everywhere excels philosophy: nothing escapes her far-seeing care. Not only did she engage herself in the twelfth century with rearing abandoned children and attending the sick, but she provided for many other wants. Already she had placed her tent on the summit of the Alps, where the religious of St. Bernard were become the protectors and guides of travellers. In those days it was necessary, at least in certain provinces, to watch over the safety of the roads: religion lent her generous aid. In her divine hands, evil itself turned to good, and the most dreadful accidents gave rise to establishments of general advantage.

Thus, about the year 1130, Adalard, Viscount of Flanders, returning from a pilgrimage to St. James's, in Galicia, fell into the hands of a band of robbers. It was on a lonely mountain, just where the three provinces of Guienne, Languedoc, and Auvergne meet, in the diocese of Rodez. This high and wild mountain, covered with snow and heavy fogs for eight months of the year, is about twenty miles from the city of Rodez and ten from any human habitation. Its position in the centre of a frightful solitude, together with the woods and marshes that surrounded it in the middle ages, made it a secure retreat for brigands and a source of alarm to travellers: it was called and is still called Albrac or Aubrac.

The noble pilgrim, seeing himself in danger of losing his life, made a vow that, if he escaped, he would found in that very place a house for the reception of pilgrims, and would banish from the mountain all the robbers that infested it. God let the robbers do him no harm, and Adalard fulfilled his vow. A short time afterwards there was to be seen rising on the mountain of Albrac a hospital, the church of which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Of all the hospitals of France, that of Albrac was one of the most celebrated. Its importance in keeping up communications between France and Spain was deeply felt by the kings of Aragon, the counts of Toulouse, and other great nobles, who contributed to the splendour of the house by considerable donations and foundations.

Five kinds of persons formed the community of this hospital: Priests, for serving the church and administering the sacraments to the pilgrims; knights, for escorting the pilgrims, pursuing the robbers, and defending the house; brothers and laymen, for the service of the hospital and the poor; *oblates*,[2] who had to look after

[1] See *Rome and Its Ruler*, by John F. Maguire, M.P., p. 185. (*Tr.*)

[2] Those were called *oblates* who offered themselves to the monastery in

the farms of the hospital; and lastly—a singular arrangement, save in the annals of Catholic charity!—ladies of rank, who dwelt there, fixed at their post, to wash the feet of pilgrims, to clean their clothes, to make their beds, and to discharge all the humble duties of servants towards masters. The Viscount of Adalard was the first superior of Albrac, having chosen to consecrate himself to the service of the poor. All these persons led a very austere life, divided between prayer, fasting, and the service of their brethren.'

Not far from Albrac there appeared at the same time another wonder of charity. You must know that in those days France and the rest of Europe were not, as they are now, covered with large and beautiful roads. Numberless coaches did not then run by day and night. Travelling was for the most part difficult and dangerous. The civilisation, even material, which comes of frequent communication between provinces and kingdoms, was at a stand-still: Religion should again set it going. The vast forests that covered the land were cut down by the hands of the religious of St. Benedict or of Citeaux. The rivers, usually so dangerous, might be crossed without risk, thanks to the religious of whom we are now going to speak.

The Pontiff Brothers or *Bridgemakers* came forth to complete the means prepared by Religion to render journeys safe and easy

order to serve God there, without, however, making profession of the religious life. They wholly abandoned their goods, their wives, and their children: they entered into a true state of servitude. As a mark of the offering that they made to the Lord of their property and their persons, they used to put round their necks the ropes of the church-bells, or lay a few pence on their heads. Thus did the donees enter into possession. The Empress St. Adelaide, or Alice, having founded at Paris the monastery of the Holy Saviour, assigned considerable revenues to it. In order to confirm the donation, she gave a knife. As a matter of fact, it was the general rule to give thus a large knife, a handle of a knife, a staff, a straw (*stipula*, from which comes the word *stipulate*), a branch of a tree, a bit of wood, or a book. At times a little clay would be taken from the very place of the donation, and hung up before the altar, tied in a linen cloth. Sometimes a little stroke on the cheek was given to the children of the contracting parties, so as to make them remember the engagements taken by their parents. From this custom has come the little stroke in Confirmation.

We must not confound the oblates who are met in various monasteries with those whom the abbeys and monasteries of royal foundation in France were obliged to receive and maintain, and who were presented by the king. The latter were received and maintained as became them, on condition of ringing the bells and sweeping the church and choir. These posts were intended for lame or sickly soldiers. Such oblates and their pensions were transferred to the *Hotel des Invalides*, built by Louis XIV. (Hélyot, t. V, p. 190.

[1] Hélyot, t. III, p. 172. See also the little work lately published by M. abbé Bousquet on the abbey of Albrac.

Their founder was a young shepherd named Benezet: his rare virtues—above all, his charity—merited for him a place among the Saints. At the age of twelve, Heaven commanded him by repeated revelations to quit his mother's flocks, and, going to Avignon, to build a bridge over the Rhone. He arrived here in 1176, and entered the church while the Bishop was preaching. The young shepherd laid his mission before him. The prelate, surprised to hear the son of a peasant, unskilled and unlettered, saying that he was sent by God to build a bridge over the Rhone, took him for a fool, and sent him to the provost of the city, to be put in some secure place.

The provost was not more credulous than the Bishop. However, the young shepherd giving some supernatural proofs of his divine mission, his proposal was accepted. The bridge was begun in 1177. Consisting of eighteen arches, and three hundred and forty feet long, it was justly regarded as a wonder.[1] Benezet had the direction of the work, which extended over eleven years. He died in 1184, before it was finished, and was buried in a chapel built on the third pier. The *Pontiff Religious* likewise constructed over the Rhone the Bridge of the Holy Ghost, more splendid than that of Avignon: it exists to the present day.

To build bridges, to establish ferries, to lend assistance to travellers: such was the vocation of the Pontiffs. This is the reason why they fixed their abodes on the banks of rivers. Here they conveyed travellers across in boats always ready. If the travellers were tired, or overtaken by night or bad weather, they offered them a shelter, entertained them, warmed them, and never left them till they had put them in a place of safety.[2] Oh, how true it is, my God! that Thou hast not ceased to do good to men. O holy Religion! O tender Mother! it is then true that thou watchest, not only over the souls, but also over the bodies, of thy children: none of their wants escape thy care!

Jealous of the happiness which all these works of charity were procuring for man and society, hell tried, by new attacks, to draw the attention of the Church elsewhere. It strove to renew her tears, by prompting the secular power to lay hands again on the nominations to ecclesiastical dignities. But God stopped it short by the Ninth General Council, which was held at Rome, in the Church of St. John Lateran. Beaten at this point, the devil was not discouraged. One of his agents, Arnauld of Brescia, a disciple of Abelard's, began to sow some dangerous errors. The Tenth General

[1] This bridge was swept away by the Rhone: only a little of it still remains.

[2] Hélyot, t. II, p. 290.

Council, held like the preceding one in the Lateran Church, did justice to the innovator and his innovations. At length, despairing of success, hell drove on against the Church a host of sectaries in rags, called the Waldenses or Vaudois, from Valdo, their leader, a native of Lyons.

The Waldenses, also called the *Poor Men of Lyons*, were heretics who pretended that evangelical poverty does not permit the possession of anything. Not only did they thus sap the foundations of society, but they also annihilated the ecclesiastical hierarchy, asserting that all Christians are priests, and setting up themselves alone as the true Church. St. John Lateran's then saw assembling within its walls the Eleventh General Council, which condemned the errors of these sectaries, the most dangerous that had appeared for a long time. The victory, however, was not yet complete.

The better to gain credit for their errors, the Waldenses affected a mortified exterior and manners apparently very austere.[1] As they were all laymen, and mostly of the lowest class, they made many dupes in the country districts. To their false virtues it was necessary to oppose true ones; to their hypocritical poverty, a sincere and universal poverty. This is what Providence did by the establishment of religious orders, so numerous in this age, and still more so in the next, wherever the errors of the Waldenses continued to spread. It attained the same end by raising up in the most lowly conditions of life illustrious models of every virtue, whose excellence God took care to reveal by splendid miracles. Such among others were St. Isidore, patron of labourers and of the city of Madrid, and St. Drogo, patron of shepherds. Let us hear their history.

Isidore was born in Spain. His parents, poor but pious, inspired him by their example and their instructions with a horror of sin and a great love for God. Their small means did not permit them to give him a liberal education; but he lost nothing thereby on the side of virtue. Only he eagerly availed himself of every opportunity that he found to hear the word of God, and the sermons at which he was present made such deep impressions on his soul that his desire of being instructed grew more and more pure and ardent.

His patience in bearing with injuries, his meekness towards all those who entertained any hatred for him, his fidelity towards his masters, his exactness in preventing everybody, even in things indifferent, made him win a complete victory over his passions. His behaviour confounds those who pretend that outward occupations

[1] A few Waldenses still exist in some parts of the Alps, especially in the diocese of Pignerol.

leave no time for exercises of piety. He transformed his labour into an act of religion, by applying himself to it in a spirit of penance, and with the intention of performing the will of God. While his hands guided the plough, his heart conversed with God and the Angels. Sometimes he would deplore his own miseries and those of other men; sometimes he would sigh for the delights of the Heavenly Jerusalem. This love of prayer, joined with the constant practice of humility and mortification, led him to that eminent sanctity which rendered him an object of admiration throughout all Spain, nay, throughout all the Church.

In his youth he entered the service of a gentleman of Madrid, named John de Vergas, as a farm-labourer. He next engaged in the state of marriage. His choice fell on Maria Torribia, who was very commendable for her virtues. Isidore always remained steadfast in the service of the same master. John de Vergas, who knew well the value of his treasure, treated Isidore as a brother, mindful of the words of Ecclesiasticus, *Let a wise servant be dear to thee as thy own soul.*[1]

One day, however, this gentleman, finding that Isidore was staying too long at the church, took his stand on a hill in order to give him a sharp reprimand when he should see him passing. But he perceived in his field two angels, clad in white, each tracing out a furrow, and Isidore in the middle. A witness of the miracle, John de Vergas hastened to grant Isidore full liberty to assist daily at the office of the church. The Saint did not abuse it. He rose very early in order to satisfy both his piety and his obligations. It is, in point of fact, a false devotion to think of pleasing God, while failing in the duties of one's state.

Isidore, full of charity for the poor, though poor himself, relieved their wants as far as he could, and spent in this good work a portion of his wages. He inspired his wife with his own sentiments, and made her a faithful imitator of his virtues, so that she died in the odour of sanctity. Isidore himself fell sick, and, having foretold the hour of his death, prepared for it with redoubled fervour. The piety with which he received the Last Sacraments drew tears from all the beholders. He slept in the Lord on the 15th of May, 1170, at the age of nearly sixty years.[2] His sanctity, manifested by striking miracles showed on which side was the true Church, the Mother of Saints, the Spouse of Jesus Christ, and the Waldenses were for ever unmasked in Spain and in the South of Europe.

At the same time Providence took care to confound them in the North, and in a great many provinces, by raising up another Saint,

[1] *Eccl.*, vii. 23. [2] Godescard, 10th May.

of obscure birth, whom it did not fail to show to all eyes, by making him travel about during a great part of his long life. This new missionary of the holiness of the Catholic Church was St. Drogo. Born in the village of Epinoy, in Flanders, he lost his father before his birth, and his mother at his birth. From his infancy, the young orphan was remarkable for his singular piety. At the age of twenty years, he divested himself of whatever he possessed, that he might more freely serve Jesus Christ. Disengaged from every worldly attachment, he clothed himself with a hair shirt and coarse habit. Then, after the example of Abraham, he left his own country. Having made several pilgrimages, he stopped in the town of Sebourg, in Hainaut, some six miles from Valenciennes, and found much pleasure in serving as a shepherd to a pious lady, named Elizabeth de la Haire.

He chose this state as the most proper to furnish him with occasions of practising obedience, humility, and mortification. He spent six years in the care of flocks; but his modesty, love of prayer, and other virtues fixed the attention and won him the esteem and friendship of everybody. The gifts that he received went to the poor, on whom he also bestowed whatever he could save from his wages.

The fear of yielding to the temptation of vain glory made him resolve on leaving his employment. He visited those places celebrated by the devotion of the Faithful, and went nine times to Rome. All these pilgrimages, being made with holy dispositions, were a source of merit to him, a great matter of edification to the Faithful, and a splendid refutation of the teachings of heretics. He returned occasionally to Sebourg; but a serious infirmity, caused by incessant fatigues, at length obliged him to settle here for the remainder of his days. He got a little cell made for himself near the church, so that thenceforth he might be able to adore God at any moment, and to look upon himself as at the foot of the altar. He remained thus shut up for the space of forty-five years. All his food consisted of a little barley bread. He drank nothing but lukewarm water. This was a new kind of mortification which he disguised by saying that his infirmity required such a regimen. He died at the age of eighty-four years, on the 16th of April, 1186.[1]

To restore to the Church what the heresy of the Waldenses had deprived her of, the Lord was pleased to bring into her maternal bosom a new idolatrous population, the Rugians. Waldemar, King of Denmark, manned his ships to subjugate the Sclavs who in-

[1] Godescard, 16th April.

nabited the island of Rugen. He laid siege to their capital, and obliged it to surrender. The first article of the capitulation was that they should deliver to the conqueror their deity named Suantovit, and that they should give for churches the lands consecrated to their false gods. Suantovit was a gigantic idol with four heads. In his right hand the god held a horn, ornamented with various metals. The high-priest filled it with wine every year, and, according to the rate at which the wine grew less, foretold the sterility or fertility of the season. Human victims, but only Christians, were sacrificed to this idol. For the cruel custom of human sacrifices had spread over the world; and, whenever you think of them, there rises, I am sure, in your heart a feeling of gratitude towards the God who abolished them.

The victorious king threw down this colossus: it fell with a fearful crash. The Danes dragged it into their camp, where it became the laughing-stock of the army. In the evening it was broken to pieces, and the wood of which it was composed made into fires for cooking. The temple, which was also of wood, was then burned. The wood of the machines that had been used in the siege was employed to build a church, and priests were stationed there. The King of Denmark was assisted by the Prince of the Rugians. Hardly yet instructed in religion, the latter ran eagerly to baptism, and contributed much to the conversion of his subjects. He himself preached to this savage people, in order to lead them to the mildness of Christianity: his pious efforts were crowned with full success.

The conversion of the Rugians, and the death of the holy shepherd of Sebourg, so precious before God and men, were a glorious end to the twelfth century.

With the thirteenth, the everlasting battle of evil against good, that is to say, of heresy and scandal against Catholic truth and sanctity, is about to become fiercer and more general. But it will only serve to show more clearly the inexhaustible resources of Providence, the great fruitfulness of our Mother the Church, as well as the weakness, insincerity, and wickedness of the partisans of error. Here arise in defence of the truth forty-two Religious Orders, three General Councils, great Kings and Queens, as illustrious by their sanctity as by the splendour of their crowns, noble geniuses, and, last of all, saints remarkable for their spotless innocence or their wondrous penance!

It required nothing less than this mighty army to protect the Christian world, so great was the rage with which hell unloosed its minions against the Church. On one hand, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Beguards, a host of heretics in every shape and form, were preaching dangerous errors. On the other, the love of

pleasures, the love of riches, and the love of honours were gaining rapidly on all classes, high and low: the spirit of the Gospel was forgotten. Lastly, we see philosophers and theologians, imbued with the philosophy of Aristotle and the Arabians, bringing into the affairs of Religion an excessive curiosity, a passionate taste for argument, which led them into the grossest delusions.' Error was threatening to prevail, concupiscence to recover its empire, and public calamities, the inevitable result of heresies and moral disorders, were going to afflict the guilty world. Before speaking of the defenders of truth and virtue, let us make known their adversaries; for it is never the Church that attacks. She is the first, she is in possession, she only defends herself: a convincing proof that she is true!

We have already spoken of the Waldenses. The Albigenses, impure remains of the Manicheans, were heretics who infested Languedoc. They pretended that this visible world is the work of the devil. They attacked the sacraments and the ceremonies of the Church, as well as her authority and prerogatives. Like the Waldenses, they were poor and made a display of regularity, though in private they gave themselves up to shameful disorders. This heresy was brought from the East into France by an old woman. She appeared suddenly, and had a great many followers in various provinces. Favoured by certain lords who had laid violent hands on the property of the Church, and whom councils were condemning, under pain of excommunication, to restore their usurped estates, the Albigenses soon became a terrible sect.

The Beguards were fanatics who pretended that man can arrive at such a degree of perfection in this life that sin is impossible to him; and that, having once reached this degree, all things are permitted to him. He is no longer bound to pray, or to fast, or to observe ecclesiastical or civil laws. The Beguards imagined themselves to have attained this perfection, and, in consequence, abandoned themselves without scruple to the most shameful disorders, but always in secret.

Now, nothing contributed more to the progress of the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and the Beguards, than their seeming regularity. It was therefore necessary to oppose them with examples of virtue, and to show that the things on which they prided themselves were practised by Catholics. As the heretics made profession of renouncing their goods, leading a poor life, devoting much time to prayer and the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and observing the evangelical counsels to the letter, God raised up fervent Catholics,

[1] See D'Argentré, Collect. Jud., t. I. *Examination of Fatalism.*

who, forming themselves into religious orders, also gave their goods to the poor, lived by their toil, meditated on the Holy Scriptures, preached against the heretics, and observed the most perfect chastity.

How admirable!—at this very moment came into existence the four Mendicant Orders: Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians. These four Orders, destined to oppose the torrent of evil, grew strong and spread rapidly. The religious who composed them did not retire into deserts and forests. But, like the salt of the earth, destined to prevent corruption, or like the sun, destined to carry light everywhere, they dwelt in towns and country places, and lived on the pious gifts of the faithful. In return, they laboured for the salvation of their benefactors, by preserving them from the contagion of new heresies and scandals. They preached, heard confessions, and everywhere established practices calculated to maintain the Faith and to nourish devotion.[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given us such admirable examples among the poor. Grant us the humility and the pure intention of St. Isidore.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never despise anyone.*

LESSON XLI.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (THIRTEENTH CENTURY.)

The Church defended: Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians St. Thomas.

THE first combatants whom God opposed, during the thirteenth century, to the numerous sectaries attacking the Church, were the Carmelites. These religious were originally hermits who lived on Mount Carmel in Palestine. They regarded the Prophet Elias as their founder and model, because he had lived on the same mountain, as also his disciple Eliseus. The superior of these hermits applied, in 1209, to the Blessed Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, for a rule. The holy man drew up for this Order some constitutions replete with wisdom. It was therein commanded the brothers to pray day and night in their cells unless they should be dispensed therefrom by lawful occupations; to fast every day, except Sunday, from the

[1] On the usefulness of the Mendicant Orders, see Bergier, art. *Mendiants.*
[2] Pluquet, t. I., p. 252.

Exaltation of the Holy Cross till Easter; never to taste flesh meat; to employ themselves in manual labour; and to keep silence from Vespers till Terce of the next day.

The conquests of the Saracens having obliged the Carmelites to leave Palestine, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, they came over to Europe. They were like a legion of experienced soldiers whom our Lord brought to the relief of the Church, his Spouse. This Order had a rapid growth, and rendered most important services. It produced an immense number of great men, whose learning and virtue did honour to Religion. The Blessed Albert, their legislator, died, in 1214, by the hands of a wretch whom he had reproved for his crimes.[1]

At the time when the Carmelites were arriving from the East to defend the Church, God raised up in the West the fourth Patriarch of the monastic life, St. Francis of Assisium. In the train of this new captain marches an army of saints, who, by their preaching, oppose truth to error; by their example—poverty, mortification, and humility to an inordinate love of riches, pleasures, and honours: in a word, true virtues to the apparent virtues of sectaries and to the scandals of bad Christians.

St. Francis, founder of the Order of Franciscans, was born at Assisium, a city of Italy, in 1182. Pity for the poor seemed to have been born with him. It often happened that he gave his clothes to those whom he met in want of them. One day, as he was in church, he heard the words of the Gospel read: *Do not carry gold, nor silver, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff.*[2] The New Antony took them according to the letter, and, immediately applying them to himself, distributed his money, laid aside his shoes and staff, and clothed himself with a poor habit, which he fastened round him with a cord.

Such was the dress that he gave to his disciples; for his words and example, which made the most hardened sinners burst into tears, so touched a number of the inhabitants of Assisium that they asked to be put under his guidance. That he might train them to the love and practice of poverty, he one day led them with him through the city of Assisium, in order to beg an alms at every door. He wished to teach them betimes that they should have no other patrimony than the gifts of charity.

He next instructed his disciples in all the exercises of a spiritual life. He frequently discoursed to them on the kingdom of God, denial of their own will, and mortification of the body, so as the better to dispose them for the execution of the design which he had

[1] Hélyot, t. I., p. 301. [2] Luc., ix., 3.

formed, namely, to send them into all parts of the world to preach the Gospel. The exhortations of the holy Patriarch, animated by the fire of divine love and supported by an ardent zeal for the conversion of souls, produced on the hearts of his children all the effects that he had hoped for. One day, as he was speaking to them of missions, all of them, impelled as it were by a holy inspiration, fell at his feet, begging him no longer to defer the accomplishment of his designs; but the moment of Providence had not yet come.

In the meantime, Francis prescribed a rule of life for his little society, and ordered them to recite for every hour of the office three *Paters*. He soon drew up his constitutions, a real masterpiece of wisdom: they have been approved and praised very highly by Sovereign Pontiffs. Here is a general survey of what they contain.

Out of humility, the saint gives his religious the name of *Friars Minor*, that is to say, Lesser Brethren. Their end is to preach by their example and their words the great virtues of Christianity: love of poverty, love of suffering, and love of humiliations. For this purpose, these religious never go on horseback; they walk barefooted and bareheaded; a little cell, a few feet long, affords them a lodging, and a straw mattress serves them as a bed; their habit is a tunic of coarse wool; they wear no linen; they must live on alms or by manual labour; they can possess nothing whatsoever. Their very name reminds them that they are to look on themselves as the last of men, and be ready to suffer all kinds of contempt and persecution from the whole world.

Who would believe it? This Order, stripped of all human means of success, and diametrically opposed to all the passions, spread with amazing rapidity. During the lifetime of St. Francis it counted more than ten thousand members; later on, it had more than a hundred and fifty thousand. These were so many living examples, everywhere present, of the fundamental virtues of Religion: humility, poverty, and chastity.

The children of St. Francis bear different names. In some countries they are called *Cordeliers*, on account of the cord that serves them as a cincture; in others, *Recollects*, on account of their separation from the world; elsewhere, *Capuchins*, on account of the peculiar form of their habit. Of all Religious Orders, that of the Capuchins has, perhaps, been the most popular. The services that they have rendered to the poor inhabitants of town and country are immense. Shame on the men who scoff at these fathers of the poor, these consolers of the afflicted, these friends of the people![1]

[1] St. Francis of Assisium founded three Orders: that of the Friars Minor; that of Nuns, who, under the names of Clares, Capuchinesses, Urbanists, &c., observe the rule which he gave to St. Clare; and the Third Order, for whom

Francis of Assisium, the Patriarch of these numberless tribes of holy men and women, is called the *Seraphic*. He owes this name to his love for God, which made him like a seraph clad in a mortal body. Among the many extraordinary favours that Our Lord did him there is not one more celebrated than that of which we are now going to speak. In a vision, wherein Francis yielded to all the

he composed a special rule, since it comprises men and women living in the world. We shall speak only of the first Order.

The disciples of the Seraphic Patriarch were successively called Friars Minor, Conventual Friars Minor or Cordeliers, Observantin Friars Minor, Reformed Friars Minor or Recollects, and Capuchin Friars Minor. The name of Friars Minor was given them by St. Francis. Calling them to struggle by their example and their discourses against the two great scourges of Christianity, cupidity and sensuality, the incomparable apostle of humility wished that this name should continually remind his children of their obligation to suffer for the love of Jesus Christ the wrongs and insults that the world would delight in heaping on them. Speaking of the events in store for his Order, he had told them that *an immense multitude of men would soon come and ask to be let remain with them under their habit*. This prophecy was not slow in its fulfilment. The Order, though unsupported by human means and directly opposed to all the passions, multiplied with amazing rapidity, since, in 1220, the Friars had already evangelised Italy, Germany, France, Spain, England, Asia, and Africa. However, if this increase in the number of his children rejoiced the tender-hearted father, it also afflicted him, for he foresaw its dangers. One day he said to the blessed brother Giles, *We are like a fisherman throwing his net into the sea, and taking a great many fishes. Our net will be thrown into the waters of the world, and it will catch such an immense number that I fear it will be broken.*

The fear of the holy Patriarch was but too well founded: in proportion as the ranks of the milita swelled, a deplorable tendency manifested itself to widen the language of the rule. Primitive fervour gradually cooled. Under pretexts more or less specious, privileges were obtained that inflicted a severe wound on discipline. The rule was no longer followed to the letter, as the founder had expressly recommended: the net was on the point of being broken. But Jesus Christ, who had promised St. Francis an endless existence for his Order, watched over it with truly paternal love, and brought forth a remedy from the very source of the evil. He raised up ardent and generous souls to work a general reform.

This, in point of fact, took place, with the approbation of Pope Celestine V., in 1294. The religious desirous to observe the rule in all its purity were called *Hermits*, on account of the solitary places in which they dwelt, and those who persisted in wishing to avail themselves of the privileges previously obtained were called *Conventuals*. A century later, new abuses necessitated a second reform: this was in 1368. It was termed the reform of *observance*, and the religious who adopted it took the name of *Observantins*. A third was made in 1420, under the name of the *strict observance*, and its adherents were called the *Reformed* in Italy, and *Recollects* in France. Finally, the last Franciscan reform took place in 1525, and was styled the reform of the *Capuchin* Friars Minor.

Thus the Order of the Friars Minor is at present divided into three great branches: the Observantins, the Reformed or Recollects, and the Capuchins. We do not mention the Cordeliers or Conventuals, as they did not accept the reform, wishing to continue in the enjoyment of their privilege to live on their

tenderness of his compassion for the sufferings of the Man-God, Our Lord vouchsafed to give him a wonderful resemblance to Himself. He imprinted on his body the *stigmas* or marks of the Passion. Francis's hands and feet were pierced in the middle with nails. The heads of the nails, round and black, appeared on the inner part of the hands and the outer part of the feet. The points, which were a

settled income. This derogation from the fundamental articles of the rule of St. Francis, prevents them from being classed among the evangelical poor. The Capuchin Friars Minor, called into France by Charles IX. in 1553, counted here in 1645, of themselves alone, three hundred and ninety-six convents and nearly eight thousand religious.* Scattered by the revolution of 1789, they were to be seen reappearing after a few years, faithful to the traditions of their blessed father, to his love of poverty, and to his apostolic spirit. They already possess seven houses in France, and look forward hopefully to the day when they may accept those which many of our venerable Archbishops and Bishops have been pleased to offer them in their respective dioceses.

To complete this short sketch of the Order of St. Francis, we must devote a few words to its various reforms, the true meaning of which is generally unknown.

Some minds, imbued with the unjust prejudices of the last century against religious orders, have not been able to discover in these reforms anything but matter of intestine wars and deplorable scandals. They have thought to bring this Order into disfavour, by pointing out such things as unquestionable proofs of the relaxation of its members. This is to ignore completely the nature of man, the nature of Christianity, the nature of the religious life. Is it not, in point of fact, well known that there are within us two men quite distinct, the soul and the body, the spirit and the flesh, the superior part and the inferior part, or, to use the language of St. Paul, the old man and the new man: the old man, whom the religious strives daily to immolate; and the new man, who grows strong in a direct ratio to the enfeeblement of the other?

By the religious profession, the old man is not annihilated: under the drugget of penance, as well as under the robes of effeminacy, he still lives, and his assaults leave his antagonists neither peace nor truce. Now, in this continual and fierce war, is it surprising if he has gained some victories, if he has secured in his favour some departure from the severity of a rule whose observance implies the total destruction of fallen nature? Religious societies, known under the name of congregations or regular clerks, as the holy Council of Trent terms them, whose engagements are limited to the general vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, with constitutions that do not bind under pain of sin, have never had any need of a reform, for the very simple reason that they have no particular form of life.

But all the Orders properly called regular, that profess a rule independently of these three vows, wear a peculiar costume, and pay the debt of public prayer—Augustinians, Benedictines, Bernardines, Dominicans, Carmelites—have stood in need of a reform at periods more or less remote from their origin. But these reforms, far from falling as an accusation on these Orders, show on the contrary the special protection of God over them. This protection shines forth in a manner almost miraculous over the Order of St. Francis, since it has lived on without interruption to our own days, a space of six hundred and fifty years,

* *Calendrier historique et chronologique de l'Eglise de Paris*, par M. Lefèvre.

little long, coming out on the other side, were bent back over the flesh. Francis had also a red wound on his side, as if it had been pierced with a lance. This wound often bled, and stained his tunic.

We cannot doubt the truth of these stigmas after the testimony of Pope Alexander IV., who, in a sermon preached before St. Bonaventure, declares that he has seen them with his own eyes. This testimony is moreover confirmed by the depositions of many other persons, who made oath that they had also seen them.[1]

Seeing his last hour draw near, the humble Francis requested a canticle which he had composed as a thanksgiving to God in the name of all creatures, to be sung. Over all the beings around him, his sanctity had restored to him a portion of that sway which innocent man exercised over all nature. When, before sunrise, he used to be at prayer in a shady cave, the birds would come and sing on the adjoining trees. If their concerts disturbed him, he would give them his blessing, and say to them, "Go away;" and the docile birds would fly off to sing their canticles elsewhere, that they might not interrupt a sweeter canticle.

When about to expire, the Saint desired to be carried to the convent of Our Lady of the Angels, and there laid on the ground, his body covered with a poor habit that had been given him. In this state, he called his disciples near, and exhorted them to the love of God and the practice of poverty and patience. He then gave them, and all those absent, his blessing. "Farewell, my children," he said to them; "remain always in the fear of the Lord." Having begun to recite a psalm and reached the words, *Deliver my soul out of its prison, that I may bless Thy holy name; the just await the reward that Thou wilt give me,*[2] he sank sweetly into the sleep of the just, on the

notwithstanding the great number of its members,* the fearful austerity of its practices, and the numerous persecutions to which it has been exposed. These successive reforms, far from weakening it, helped to make it more pure and powerful. We may say of these peaceful revolutions that they reveal all the strength of its constitution, and show us that the grain of mustard-seed, dropped into the soil of Assisium, whose branches now extend to the ends of the earth, always retained sufficient life to send forth strong and vigorous shoots in place of those which had withered.

(Note of Rev. Father Laurent, the present Provincial of the Capuchin Friars Minor in France.)

[1] Hélyot, t. VII., p. 24. [2] *Ps.* cxli., 8.

* The number of Capuchin Friars Minor, not to count the other Franciscan congregations, rises again to-day to fourteen thousand, of whom four hundred conduct twenty-two missions in heathen and heretical countries. The Franciscan Order counts at present 200,000 men and 300,000 women, including the Tertiaries. It has 252 provinces and 26,000 convents, of which five are in Palestine and 30 in the whole Turkish empire. It has given to the Church seven Popes and 3,000 Bishops. More than 80 emperors and empresses, kings and queens, have been associated to the Order, which has, moreover, the glory of having produced 3,000 persons canonised or beatified, of whom 1,700 were martyrs. (1863.)

4th of October, 1226, in the forty-fifth year of his age, after seeing more than eighty houses of his Order established throughout Christendom. He was only a deacon, his humility having prevented him from ascending to the priesthood.[1]

Scarcely had Francis breathed his last when God was pleased to manifest his sanctity, in order to teach the peoples that virtue was not to be found among heretics, but in the old and only true Church. A wonderful change appeared in the body of the blessed Patriarch: his skin, which had been dark and sunburnt, became white as snow; the stigmas presented themselves with greater evidence than previously. Leave was then given to examine them, and the whole city of Assisium ran to see the salutary signs of our redemption, with which Jesus Christ had favoured His servant. The next day an incredible multitude of people, carrying branches and lighted tapers in their hands, accompanied the holy body to the church of St. George, where it was interred.[2] His tomb soon became celebrated for great miracles.

Let us now quit Italy, and come to France, where a new spectacle, no less proper to make us bless that Providence which watches over the Church, awaits us. While St. Francis of Assisium and his numerous children were showing so admirably, by their example and their discourses, the unchangeable sanctity of the Catholic Church, St. Dominic and his companions were driving heresy back even to its entrenchments. The infamous heretics known under the name of Albigenses, from having established themselves in the neighbourhood of the city of Albi, were continuing their ravages and their profanations. It was heartrending to see so many churches profaned, altars broken down, sacred vessels turned to the most unworthy use. Still more heartrending was the sight of so many souls, which had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, becoming every day the prey of the devil. Bitter tears flowed from the eyes of the Church. Her Heavenly Spouse beheld them, and hastened to wipe them away. To console her, He raised up St. Dominic.

This Saint, as distinguished by the nobility of his race as by his talents and virtues, was born in Spain, of the illustrious house of the Guzmans, in the year 1170. His virtuous parents left nothing undone to give him a sound Christian education: the child corresponded perfectly with their care. Scarcely had he begun to speak when he asked to go to the churches, that he might

[1] See *Vie de S. Francois d'Assise*, by M. Chavin, and the small but delightful Italian work, *Fioretti di S. Fr.*, in—18.

[2] See Godescard Oct. 4: Hélyot t. I p. 27

there pray to God. He was already rising privately at night to give to this holy occupation the time which he took away from his rest. When a little older, he was sent to the public schools: he there distinguished himself by his success, his tender piety, and his penitential life. He fasted often, slept little, and generally lay on the boards of his room. His love for the poor showed itself on every occasion, but it shone forth with special brilliancy in a famine that afflicted Spain. To relieve those who suffered hunger, the young scholar sold his furniture, and even his books. Another time, having nothing else to sell, he wanted to sell himself, that he might be able to ransom a poor widow's son, taken by the Saracens.

His charity, like that of all the Saints, was not confined to relieving the corporal necessities of the neighbour: he would also procure him spiritual goods. He accordingly devoted himself to severe penances, in order to obtain the conversion of sinners, especially the most hardened: the Lord heard the sighs of his zealous servant. After some time he was ordained Priest, and the holy unction that flowed on his brow gave new ardour to his zeal for the conversion of souls. Having edified Spain, and won back to God a great many sinners almost incurable, Dominic passed into France. On this new stage he displayed all the power of his virtues and his talents for the conversion of the Albigenses: God blessed his labours.

After incredible fatigues, the holy Apostle had the happiness of leading back to the fold of Jesus Christ a multitude of stray sheep. It was then that Dominic and his companions resolved on remaining together and founding a religious Order, whose chief objects should be the preaching of the Gospel, the conversion of heretics, the defence of the faith, the propagation of Christianity. The Saint went to Rome, and submitted his design to the Sovereign Pontiff, who approved of it. The religious of the new Order were given the name of *Friars Preachers* (or *Preaching Friars*), or *Dominicans*. In France they are called *Jacobins*, because their first house in Paris was in the *Rue Saint-Jacques*.

Here are the chief articles of their rule: perpetual silence—the religious cannot at any time speak to one another without the permission of the superior,—almost continual fasting, abstinence from meat, except in great sickness, the use of woollen cloth instead of linen. They have many other austerities. Their dress consists of a white habit and scapular, with black cloak and hood, the latter ending in a point like that of the Carthusians.

The Order of the Dominicans spread rapidly through all parts of the world. From its origin it never ceased to render the greatest services to the Church, by its missions in heathen as well as in

Catholic countries. It sent forth a multitude of men eminent for their learning and sanctity. Such among others were St. Antoninus, St. Vincent Ferrer, Blessed Albert the Great, Vincent of Beauvais, and Louis of Granada; but the most celebrated of all was assuredly St. Thomas, of whom we shall soon have to speak. Sovereign Pontiffs were pleased to load this Order, so powerful an auxiliary to the Faith, with favours. Among the number, it is always a Dominican who is the master of the sacred palace. Let us mention the circumstance that gave rise to this office.

St. Dominic, being in Rome, noticed that the servants of the Cardinals and court ministers amused themselves in gaming and otherwise wasting their time while their masters were engaged with the Sovereign Pontiff. He was sensibly afflicted at this, and suggested to the Pope to appoint some one to give them instructions. The Holy Father approved of the idea, and charged Dominic with this employment. The Saint explained to them the Epistles of St. Paul. His instructions were attended with such success that the Sovereign Pontiff wished them to be continued in the future, and that this employment should be given to a Dominican religious, with the title of master of the sacred palace.[1]

We are also indebted to St. Dominic for the institution of the celebrated Confraternity of the *Rosary*. In order to make his missions successful, he tried to secure the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, by teaching people to honour in a simple and easy manner her principal mysteries and those of Our Lord. The Saint also wished to indemnify the tender Mother of Christians for the outrages of heretics. The devotion of the Holy Rosary is very widely spread, and, by gaining for those who practise it the protection of Mary, draws down on them the most precious favours: of which we shall speak in the fourth part of this work. Full of days, rich in virtues, and honoured by miracles, St. Dominic died at Bologna, on the 5th of August, 1221.[2]

[1] This is done to the present day; but the master of the sacred palace no longer gives instructions to the servants of the Cardinals: he confines himself to the servants of the Pope. He is obliged to instruct them on the truths of Faith, in Lent and Advent, and on Principal Festivals.

As time went on, the Sovereign Pontiffs treated the master of the sacred palace with much honour and confidence. No one can preach before the Pope unless he has been appointed to do so by the master of the sacred palace. He has a right to reprove the preacher publicly, if there is need to do so. Nothing can be printed in Rome, or within his district, without his approbation. He is judge in Rome for all printers, booksellers, and engravers, as to what concerns the printing, sale, purchase, admission, and despatch of books and illustrations.

[2] Hélyot, t. III. p. 210.—The Holy Rosary, which chiefly consists in a repetition of the Hail Mary, inspired Père Lacordaire, the author of a Life of

To the Carmelites, Franciscans, and Dominicans were joined, in the thirteenth century, other auxiliaries of the Faith: these were the Augustinians. Up to this period, there were existing in the Church several religious congregations under the rule of St. Augustine. To give them more consistency and stability, Pope Alexander IV. united them into one body, under the guidance of a superior-general: such was the origin of the Augustinians, the fourth of the Mendicant Orders. As regular and austere as the others, this Order was not less useful nor less celebrated.[1]

While this host of exemplary apostles prevented libertinism and heresy from spreading among the common people, other defenders of truth and virtue maintained the cause of the Church before the learned; for, as we have said, some great doctors in the twelfth century, led away by a dangerous curiosity, had changed sound doctrine, and supported grave errors borrowed from the Moors of Spain, that is to say, from the Mahometans settled there.

To drive error from its new position, God raised up some extraordinary geniuses, who united the most wonderful learning with the most perfect virtue: such in particular were St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas. The first is called the Seraphic Doctor; the second, the Angelic Doctor. Not being able to relate the history of both, we choose that of St. Thomas, because his name resounds more frequently in our ears.

St. Thomas—destined by God to set sacred learning free from many useless and dangerous subtleties; to mark with a steady hand the limits of knowledge and faith, and to show their necessary connection; and, lastly, to refute the Mahometan errors introduced into Christian schools—was born in Italy towards the close of the year 1226. His father, Landulph, was Count of Aquino and Lord of Loretto. His mother, Theodora, was daughter of the Count of Theata. Scarcely had the young Thomas attained his fifth year, when his father placed him under the care of the religious of Mount Cassino, to be instructed in the first principles of the sciences and of Religion. His masters were amazed at his rapid progress. Returning to his family, when about ten years old, the young scholar was the admiration of his parents and their many friends. Everyone was struck at his modesty and piety: he spoke little, and never uttered a word but to the purpose. His greatest pleasure was to plead the cause of the poor with his parents, and it happened more

St. Dominic, with the following reflection. The rationalist smiles on beholding rows of people repeating the same words: he who is enlightened with a better light understands that love has only one word, and that, while saying the same thing over and over again, it never repeats itself.

[1] Hélyot, t. III, c. iii. p. 13.

than once that he retrenched from his own food in order to relieve them.

He was soon sent to Naples to continue his studies. Amid the corruption of this large city, Thomas knew how to keep fresh and fair the flower of his innocence. He entered into a treaty with his eyes never to rest them on any dangerous object. At length, disgusted with the world, he took the religious habit with the Dominicans of Naples in 1243: he was then seventeen years old. His father, mother, brothers, and sisters tried every means imaginable to bring him back to the world. Matters went so far that he was shut up in a castle belonging to the family. This persecution lasted for several years. It was useless, and even turned against those who had originated it. In effect, Thomas gave such good reasons for his choice that two of his sisters followed his example and entered religion.

Meanwhile, the Saint escaped from his prison, and came to Paris with the General of the Dominicans. He was then sent to Cologne, where Blessed Albert the Great was teaching theology with much renown. Under this able master, Thomas made extraordinary progress; but, out of humility, he concealed it. From the same motive he condemned himself to a rigorous silence, which his fellow-students mistook for stupidity: they called him in scorn the *dumb ox*. Albert having questioned him on some points of great obscurity, he answered with such clearness and precision that all present were absolutely astounded. Albert himself cried out in a transport of joy, "We call Thomas a *dumb ox;* but he will one day bellow so loud with his doctrine that he will be heard throughout the whole world."[1]

The prediction was verified. A preacher, a professor, a writer, Thomas displayed in succession all kinds of talents, even that of poetry. It is to him that we are indebted for the exquisite office of the Blessed Sacrament, with which there is nothing else to be compared.

In difficult questions he relied less on his labour than on prayer. Hence he used to say that he had learned less from books than at the foot of his crucifix and before the altar. The chief cities in which he taught were Cologne, Paris, Rome, Bologna, and Naples: all the world did justice to his merits. St. Louis often invited him to table, and he would appear as modest and recollected at court as in his convent.

You have often heard it said that men of genius are occasionally

[1] Nos vocamus istum *bovem mutum;* sed ipse dabit talem in doctrina mugitum, quod in toto mundo sonabit.

subject to abstractions: the Angelic Doctor was not free from them. Being one day at table with the king, he happened to fall into an abstraction that deserves to be related. He was at the time striving to refute the heresy of the Manicheans, known under the name of the Albigenses. His head full of the subject, he suddenly cried out, *That settles the point against the Manicheans!*[1] His Prior, who had accompanied him, told him to remember where he was. The Saint felt it a duty to repair his fault by asking the king's pardon. But this good prince, far from showing any displeasure at what had occurred, ordered one of his secretaries to write out the argument for the Saint, lest he should afterwards forget it.

Thomas refused all the ecclesiastical dignities that Sovereign Pontiffs were pleased to offer him. At length, though still young, he was ripe for Heaven. Called by the holy Pope Gregory X. to the œcumenical council of Lyons, he set out on his journey, but fell sick at Fossa Nuova, a celebrated Cistercian abbey, in the diocese of Terracina. While the Abbot and the religious were preparing to bring him the Holy Viaticum, he begged those around his bed to lay him on ashes, so that, as he said, he might receive Jesus Christ with more respect: it was thus that he wished to await the Saviour.

Notwithstanding his great weakness, as soon as he saw the Sacred Host in the hands of the Priest, he pronounced the following words with a tenderness and devotion that drew tears from all the beholders: "I firmly believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present in this august sacrament. I adore You, O my God and my Saviour! I receive You, O You who are the price of my redemption and the viaticum of my pilgrimage, You for love of whom I have studied, laboured, preached, taught! I trust that I have not advanced anything contrary to Your divine word; but, if I have chanced to do so through ignorance, I retract it publicly, and submit all my writings to the judgment of the Holy Roman Church."

The Saint, having then recollected himself to make some acts of religion, received the Holy Viaticum, and only let himself be carried back to his bed when he had finished his thanksgiving. As his strength was gradually failing, he wished that Extreme Unction should be administered to him while he was still perfectly conscious, and he answered all the prayers of the Church himself. He then expressed his gratitude to the Abbot and the religious. One of them having asked him what he ought to do in order to live always faithful to grace, the Saint replied, "Walk continually in

[1] Conclusum est contra Manichæos.

the presence of God."[1] Such were his last words. He prayed for a few moments more, and then fell asleep in the Lord, the 7th of March, 1274, in the forty-eighth year of his age.[2]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given to Thy Church so many religious orders and so many holy doctors to defend it. Grant us the humility and the tender devotion of St. Thomas.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often say to myself that I will save my soul.*

LESSON XLII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (THIRTEENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church consoled: St. Louis, King of France; St. Ferdinand, King of Castile and Leon. The Church propagated: Conversion of Livonia and Cumania. Three General Councils. The Church consoled: Foundation of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy.

If, in those days, the common people and the learned had need of masters and models, heresy and libertinism rendered them no less necessary for kings and potentates. Many princes, it is true, com-

[1] The same Saint, being asked by a sister of his what she should do in order to be saved, answered her thus: *Velle*—"Will it."

[2] The works of St. Thomas are divided into four parts:—

1. His *Philosophical* Works. The Saint wrote them to refute heretics, and the Arabs of Spain, who made use of Aristotle to combat Religion. Thanks to the holy doctor, Aristotle, who was at the time called the terror of Christians, was rendered as it were orthodox, and obliged to furnish Religion with new arms against atheism and incredulity. It is nowadays remarked, not without some reason, that he relies too often on the authority of this philosopher.

2. His *Commentaries* on the four books of the Master of the Sentences. This is a methodical course of theology.

3. His *Theological Summa*, an admirable work, wherein reason and faith always go hand in hand. The *Summa against the Gentiles* was composed at the request of St. Raymund of Pennafort, in order to furnish the preachers of Spain with means to labour profitably for the conversion of the Jews and Saracens.

4. His *Opuscula*. A great many subjects are treated of herein: among them are explanations of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary.

We have also commentaries of St. Thomas on most of the Scriptures. He seems to surpass himself in explaining the Epistles of St. Paul.

The best edition of St. Thomas is that of Rome, 1570, eighteen vols., folio.

bated error with sword in hand; but a greater number set an example of disorder. With no other rules than their passions, and always divided among themselves, they overwhelmed the people with tributes and taxes, that they might be able to continue their luxury and their quarrels. Pillage and murder, the tears of families and the distress of the weak and lowly, were the consequences of those dreadful wars, ever beginning and never ending. All this the Church deplored. God, moved with pity, sent her several great kings, whose strong arms served to arrest and remedy the evil. Among the number were St. Ferdinand, King of Spain, and St. Louis, King of France.

The latter, the glory of the French monarchy, was son of Louis VIII., King of France. He was born on the 25th of April, 1215, at the castle of Poissy. In the course of time, wishing to show his esteem for the grace of baptism and the divine adoption, he used to sign himself *Louis of Poissy*. O great prince! thou wast right: the title of Christian is preferable to that of king!

The early years of Louis were spent under the eyes of Queen Blanche, his mother. This virtuous princess, anxious that he should imbibe with her milk the great maxims of Religion, would often take him on her knees, and say to him those beautiful words which ought to be on the lips and in the heart of every mother truly worthy of the name: "My son, I love you very tenderly, but I would rather see you dead at my feet than ever see you fall into one mortal sin." The pious queen's lessons were not lost. Louis did not let a single day pass without calling them to mind, and, thanks to them, he had the happiness of preserving his baptismal innocence all his life.

At the age of twelve, the young prince mounted the fairest throne in the world, and was consecrated at Rheims. Like Solomon, he besought the Lord to be his Guide and Support in government. His prudence, firmness, love of justice, and other qualities that make valiant warriors, good kings, and great saints, proved that his prayer had been heard.

After devoting the greater part of the day to affairs of state, he took pleasure in conversing with pious persons. To those who blamed him for giving some hours to prayer he very sensibly replied, "Men are strange beings. My attention to prayer is called a crime, and not a word would be said if I spent the time that I give to it in gaming or hunting."

Deeply convinced of the truth that kings are the ministers of God for good, the wise monarch applied himself before all things else to make Religion flourish, to root out heresies, and to banish scandals. What he could not do by himself, he did by others. He

founded a great many monasteries, wherein were formed a multitude of men who rendered important services to the Church. His charity reached to all. Every day he fed in his palace, and often served them himself at table, a hundred and twenty poor persons; sometimes their number rose to two hundred.

Having been so happy as to obtain the holy crown of thorns worn by the Saviour of the World, he built a magnificent chapel in Paris to receive it.[1] His Faith was so lively that, so to speak, he saw its truths. One day a person came all eagerness to tell him that Our Lord had appeared visibly in the hands of a priest who was celebrating Mass. The king answered quietly, "I have no need to see in order to believe." He treated blasphemers as enemies of the State, banished strolling players out of the kingdom, and punished with exemplary severity those lords who oppressed their subjects. When justice was to be administered, he had no regard to human considerations or ties of blood. Seated under an oak at Vincennes, the good king judged causes, and required immediate reparation.

But Providence had other views over Louis. Not only should he make Religion flourish again in his states, but he should also continue the sacred war of civilisation against Mussulman barbarism. The Christians of Palestine were groaning once more under the yoke of the infidels: Louis decided on going to their relief. If these great expeditions had not the direct success expected, they at length gained one very important point: they prevented the Saracens from injuring the Church, by weakening their strength, and inspiring them with a fear of the Christian name.

Louis embarked accordingly at the head of a numerous army. Damietta was taken, but the battle of Massour was lost, and the king therein made prisoner. He appeared as great in his prison as on his throne. The Mussulmans could not help admiring his patience, as well as his firmness in refusing whatever he did not consider reasonable. They said to him, "We look on you as our captive and our slave, and you in chains treat us as if we were your prisoners." It was once boldly proposed that he should give a sum of money for his ransom, but he made this noble reply to the Sultan's messengers: "Go and tell your master that a king of France is not ransomed by money; I will give the sum for my people and Damietta for my person."

Louis, on his return to France, applied himself with new zeal to promote the happiness of his subjects. As great a commander as he

[1] A masterpiece of Christian architecture, this chapel still exists under the name of the *Holy Chapel*.

was a good king, he dealt according to reason with the enemies of the kingdom, and embarked a second time for the deliverance of the Christians; but God was satisfied with his good will. Scarcely had the holy king landed in Africa, near Tunis, when he fell sick. Seeing his end draw near, he called his eldest son, and delivered to him his last will in the following simple words, so worthy of a Christian, a hero, a king, and a father:—

"My son," he said to Philip, "the first thing that I recommend to you is to love God with your whole heart, to be willing to suffer all kinds of tortures rather than sin mortally. If God send you adversity, receive it meekly and return Him thanks for it, and think that you have well deserved it. If He give you prosperity, do not grow worse through pride; for we ought not to make war on God with His own gifts. Go often to confession: above all things choose a wise and prudent confessor, who may teach you safely what you ought to do or avoid, and who may have courage to reprove you and to show you your defects. Attend to the service of Holy Church devoutly, with heart and mouth: especially at Mass, when the consecration takes place. Be kind and compassionate towards the poor, and help them as much as you can. Maintain the good customs of your kingdom, and correct the evil ones. Do not load your people with taxes . . .

"Take care to have in your company sensible and loyal men, with no hankering after wealth, whether religious or seculars, and often speak to them, and shun the company of the wicked. Listen willingly to the word of God and keep it in your heart, and gladly purchase prayers and pardons. Let no one be so bold before you as to say a word that may occasion sin, a word of detraction behind another's back, or a disrespectful word of God. Often return thanks to God for the good things which He has given you, that you may be deserving of others.

"Hold fast to justice; be stern in your adherence to sound principles; turn not to the right nor to the left; defend the cause of the poor till truth appears. Do everything in your power to maintain peace and justice among your subjects. As for the cities and the customs of your kingdom, keep them in that state and freedom in which your predecessors kept them: only, correct whatever is bad in them. It is by the strength and the wealth of large cities that you will awe strangers, and especially your peers and barons . . . Take care that the expenses of your palace are reasonable. And lastly, take care, my sweet son, that you have Masses sung for my soul and prayers said for your whole kingdom, and that you grant me a special share in all the good that you do. My most dear son, I give you all the blessings that a father can give his son. May the

Holy Trinity and all the saints guard you from evil! May God give you the grace always to do His will, that He may be honoured by you, and that you and I, and all of us, may after this mortal life meet again, to praise Him for ever and ever. Amen!"

The king then received the last sacraments with a fervour that made all the bystanders shed tears. When he felt the moment of his departure at hand, he caused himself to be laid on a bed of ashes. Here, his arms crossed on his breast and his eyes raised to heaven, he sweetly expired, pronouncing the words of Scripture, *Lord, I will go into Thy house.*[1] Thus died the best of kings, whose virtues we cannot admire without blessing that religion which produced them: it was on the 25th of August, 1270.

While St. Louis was accomplishing so gloriously the twofold mission, intrusted to him by Providence, of banishing heresy and scandal from the upper ranks of society, and driving back Mussulman barbarism, another king was acquitting himself of the same duties. Both proved clearly what required special proof in that age, that true virtues were not to be found among the sects, but only in the old and unchanging Church.

This king, the rival of St. Louis in those qualities which make heroes and saints, was Ferdinand III., King of Castile and Leon. He was cousin of St. Louis, and son of Alphonsus, King of Leon. Ascending the throne in his eighteenth year, he took care to surround himself with the most virtuous and competent men. Like St. Louis, he made it his chief task to see that God was known and served within his realms. He built or repaired a great many churches, monasteries, and hospitals: notwithstanding such great expenses, he did not burden his subjects with taxes. In the war that he waged against the Moors, one of those pretended politicians who never take into account a people's misery bethought himself of proposing to him a plan for raising an extraordinary subsidy. "God forbid," said the saint, indignantly, "that I should ever adopt your plan! Providence can assist me by other means. I am more afraid of the curses of one poor woman than of the whole army of the Moors."

His states made peaceful and happy, Ferdinand occupied himself with the extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. God so permitted it that the Church might be compensated for the losses she had experienced through the heresies of the Albigenses, Waldenses, Beguards, and other sectaries. This holy king had a consciousness of his mission, for he used to say to God, "Lord, who searchest the reins and the heart, Thou knowest that I seek not my own glory,

[1] *Ps.* v

but Thine; I do not desire to acquire perishable kingdoms, but to extend the knowledge of Thy name."

It was in 1225 that Ferdinand marched for the first time against the infidels. He captured in a single campaign nearly twenty of the best places in Andalusia. The Archbishop of Toledo undertook the pastoral functions in the army; for Ferdinand wished that his soldiers should be inspired with sentiments of a tender piety, and set them himself an example of all virtues. He fasted strictly, and wore a hair-cloth in the shape of a cross. He often spent the night in prayer, especially when preparing for a battle, and he attributed all his success to God.

In his army there was always to be found an image of the Blessed Virgin, so that the troops, beholding it, might be excited to confidence in the Mother of God. Is it surprising that an army of Christian soldiers, commanded by a saint, should have wrought wonders? The infidels themselves could not help seeing the hand of God. After the capture of the almost impregnable Seville, the governor of the infidels said to them, weeping, "It is only a saint that, with so few troops, could take possession of a city so strong and so well peopled." Carthagena, Murcia, and a great many other cities occupied by the Moors, fell into the hands of the Christians.

But the most celebrated of Ferdinand's conquests was that of Cordova. This city had been held by the infidels for the previous five hundred and twenty-four years, and had long been the capital of their empire in Spain. The Christian army entered it on SS. Peter and Paul's Day, 1236. The great mosque was at once purified, and converted into a church under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. The bells of Compostella, which the Sultan Almanzor had carried away on the shoulders of Christians, were brought back to Compostella on the shoulders of Moors, by the command of Ferdinand.

Meanwhile, the holy king was drawing near the day when he should enter into possession of the heavenly kingdom won by his virtues. Warned of his last hour, he made a confession of his whole life, and asked the Viaticum, which was taken to him by the Bishop of Segovia, followed by the clergy and the court. When he saw the Blessed Sacrament in his room, he got down from his bed, and placed himself on his knees. He had a rope round his neck as a sign of penance, and held in his hands a crucifix, which he kissed and bathed with his tears. In the same posture he received the Body of the Saviour, with sentiments of the most tender devotion. Before dying, he sent for his children in order to give them his blessing and some wholesome advice. During his agony, he requested the clergy to recite the Litanies and the *Te Deum*. Scarcely were

these prayers ended, when he calmly expired: the 30th May, 1254.[1]

The conquests of St. Ferdinand from the Moors of Spain were not the only compensation that the Church received for the losses she had sustained from heresy. The light of the Gospel advanced rapidly towards the North: Livonia was converted to the Faith. The barbarous inhabitants of this vast country used to adore beasts, trees, rivers, herbs, and unclean spirits. With one hand Religion overthrew the altars of these absurd deities, with the other she planted the cross; and civilisation, the daughter of truth, smiled on this inhospitable land.

A part of Prussia followed the example of Livonia. The Cumans, another infidel people, who dwelt at the mouth of the Danube, also received the good tidings, that is to say, tidings of the divine origin of man, of his end, and of the means to attain his end. Passing over to Christianity, this nomad people became a civilised people. Do not, if you please, forget what we are now going to say: as often as the Gospel converts a nation, it makes two conquests, one over error, and the other over barbarism. This is a truth which cannot be too often repeated.

Other consolations also came to the Church from the side of Germany and Italy. In Germany, St. Elizabeth showed to the powerful of the age an admirable union of all virtues with temporal greatness. In Italy, an illustrious penitent, St. Margaret of Cortona, repaired by a penance of twenty years the scandals of her youth.

Lastly, to strengthen all the good that was done by the Religious Orders and the Saints of whom we have just spoken, there were three General Councils held during the thirteenth century: they were the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth œcumenical ones. The first assembled at Rome, in the church of St. John Lateran, in 1215: Pope Innocent III. presided. It counted two patriarchs—those of Constantinople and Jerusalem—seventy-one archbishops, four hundred and twelve bishops, eight hundred abbots, the primate of the Maronites, and St. Dominic. In this splendid assembly, the errors of the Albigenses and other heretics were condemned. Here, too, was made the famous decree which obliges all the Faithful who have come to the use of reason, to go to confession at least once a year and to communion at Easter. That she might obtain more, the Church was satisfied with asking less. Before this Council, the obligation of receiving the Sacraments had recurred much more frequently; but laxity of manners required this encroachment on the ancient discipline.

[1] Godescard, May 30.

The second was held at Lyons. Its object was to put an end to the troubles afflicting Europe, and to decide on a new crusade: it took place in 1245.

The third also assembled at Lyons, twenty-nine years later on, that is to say, in 1274: it strove to unite the Greek with the Latin Church.

Divine charity, manifesting itself in so many ways, was not yet exhausted. There remained one great misery to relieve: the number of Christian captives among the infidels had increased considerably during the late wars. Unfortunate slaves! be comforted: you have not escaped the maternal eyes of the Church! Your chains will soon fall to the ground! Behold, a new Religious Order runs to your aid! This Order, truly heroic in virtue and devotedness, is that of *Our Lady of Mercy, for the Redemption of Captives.*

There are in the Church two Orders whose object is to deliver Christians from the yoke of infidels, and—let us say it with a holy pride—it was in France that the founders of both were born. The first of these Orders is that of the Trinitarians: we have spoken of it. The second is that of Our Lady of Mercy. It may be said that the Blessed Trinity, by repeated and most certain revelations, originated the former; but the Blessed Virgin, the comfortress of the afflicted, was pleased to originate the latter. As the instrument of her merciful compassion, she chose St. Peter Nolasco. Let us relate, in a few words, the history of this great servant of Mary.

St. Peter Nolasco was born in Languedoc about the year 1199. His parents wanted to engage him in the married state; but Peter, full of contempt for the world, had sought for his heart a heart larger than that of any creature, and had given himself wholly to God. He passed into Spain, and was charged with the education of the son of the king of Aragon. Obliged to live at court, Peter knew how to fortify himself against the seductions of pomp and pleasure; but he neglected none of the means that Christian prudence suggests. Faithful to the twofold exercise of meditation and mortification, he had four hours for prayer during the day and two during the night. He henceforth became so deeply touched with pity for poor Christian captives among the infidels, that he resolved on sacrificing whatever he possessed for their deliverance. He was wholly taken up with this idea, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, during the night of the 1st of August, 1218, the Feast of *St. Peter in Chains.* "God wishes," said the august Queen of Heaven to him, "that you should establish a religious order for the redemption of captives."

Peter, who was not at all credulous, consulted his confessor on

this vision: the confessor was St. Raymund of Pennafort, one of the most illustrious doctors of the Church. What was the surprise of our saint when Raymund assured him that he had had the same vision, and that he had been commanded by the Blessed Virgin to encourage him in his design! Both spoke to the king regarding the matter, and their astonishment reached its height when the pious monarch told them that the Blessed Virgin had revealed the same thing to him. Sure of the will of God, they no longer had a thought but of putting their hands to the work.

The king supplied ample means to found a house: Peter retired thither. A great many lords soon came to him, and entered the new order. Besides the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, these religious made a fourth, which shows us how far Religion carries charity towards the neighbour. They made a vow to dispose of their own persons, and to remain in slavery among the infidels, if necessary, for the deliverance of captives.

Here is the formula of this engagement, unique in the annals of the world: "I, N, Knight of Our Lady of Mercy and the Redemption of Captives, make profession and promise to observe obedience, poverty, and chastity; to live for God; to follow the rule of St. Benedict; and, if necessary for the deliverance of captives, I will remain a captive among the Saracens."[1]

And, in fact, many of these generous servants of Mary were to be seen remaining in slavery among the infidels, so that they might ransom a greater number of slaves, and have an opportunity of preaching the Faith to Mahometans. Of this number was St. Raymund Nonnatus, who remained eight months in captivity. He had to endure all this time unheard-of tortures, until the infidels, unable to prevent him from preaching, bored a hole through his lips with a hot iron, and closed his mouth with a padlock, so as to bind him down to an everlasting silence.

Another, St. Peter Pascal, Bishop of Jaen, having spent all his income on the relief of the poor and the deliverance of captives, undertook also the conversion of the Mahometans. He was immediately laden with chains and subjected to the most cruel punishments. The clergy and people of his diocese immediately sent him a large sum of money for his ransom. He received it very gratefully; but, instead of expending it on the purchase of his own freedom, he bought off with it a great many women and children,

[1] Ego, N, miles sanctæ Mariæ de Mercede et Redemptione Captivorum, facio promissionem et promitto obedientiam, paupertatem, castitatem servare, Deo vivere, et comedere secundum regulam S. Benedicti, et in Sarracenorum potestate, in pignus, si necesse fuerit, ad redemptionem Christi fidelium, detentus manebo.

whose weakness made him afraid that they would forsake their religion. As for himself, he always remained in the hands of the barbarians, who at length obtained for him the crown of martyrdom.[1]

It would not be easy to count the number of slaves whom the religious of Our Lady restored to their families. In two visits that St. Peter Nolasco made to the Moors, he brought away more than four hundred. Laden with blessings and rich in virtues, the holy founder departed this life in 1266, aged sixty-seven years.[2]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given St. Louis not only to France, but to the Church, in order to defend and edify it. Grant us the charity and firmness of this holy king.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will pray for sinners.*

LESSON XLIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FOURTEENTH CENTURY.)

The Church attacked: Dulcinists, Flagellants, &c.; Schism of the West. The Church defended: Foundation of the Cellites and the Order of St. Brigit; SS. Elzear and Delphina.

As after a rain-storm, long expected during the heats of summer, one sees hosts of insects and little reptiles coming forth from the ground, so, in the fourteenth century, after the long fermentation of preceding ages, there were to be seen hosts of sectaries hurrying to-and-fro, and rushing with fanatical zeal into all kinds of absurdities and debaucheries. Dulcinists, Fratricelli, Flagellants, Turlurpins, &c.: such were the ignoble enemies that hell urged on against the Church. All these heretics were so many modifications of the Albigenses and other innovators already condemned. Like their predecessors, they made profession of absolute poverty, of great mortification, of continual prayer, and, above all, of exceeding charity towards one another. Under this fine exterior, they concealed the most abominable vices, which they had even raised to the rank of virtues.

Sworn enemies of the Catholic Church, which condemned them, they distinguished two Churches. One was rich, possessing domains and dignities: the Pope and the Bishops were its heads.

[1] Godescard, Dec. 6, and Aug. 31. [2] Hélyot, t. III, p. 280

But, said the sectaries, there is another, wholly spiritual, whose only supports are poverty and virtue, and we are its members. The hatred of the sectaries against Sovereign Pontiffs gained for them the protection of certain princes, condemned in course of time for their disturbances and their usurpation of the property of others. To heresy was joined a deplorable schism, which laid waste the Church for nearly forty years. Such were the terrible means by which hell attacked in this century the work of human redemption.

Behold what God opposed thereto! (*a*) Thirty-nine Religious Orders or Congregations, which brilliantly displayed to the eyes of the whole world the holiness and truth of the Catholic Church. Charity, appearing under its most varied forms, reached to new wants, while the most sincere piety, the most rigorous mortification, and the most pure chastity made the false virtues of heresy grow pale. (*b*) Great Saints in all conditions of life. (*c*) Martyrs. (*d*) The strong language of the Priesthood, and of the Church assembled in general council. At length God repaired the losses of the Church by the conversion of new peoples, and solemnly verified His immortal words, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against thee.*[1]

The errors of the heretics in the fourteenth century were so gross that they almost refuted themselves. Their false virtues were far more dangerous. Hence, we see rising up many more contemplative and infirmarian than apologist orders. Besides, the Dominicans, founded in the preceding century, were on the ground, pursuing zealously the object of their institute, which was the defence of truth.

Among the infirmarian orders of the fourteenth century appeared that of the Cellites. The solicitude of a most tender mother for an only son never equalled that of God for man, His beloved child. The proof of this truth, capable of softening the hardest heart, is written on every page of this Catechism. Go to all the centuries, and ask each whether God loved it. Not one of them but will show you the varied and special marks of God's charity towards it! Not a want of ours escapes the eye—I speak amiss—the heart of the Redeemer! Our soul and our body are in turn the objects of His care. During life, He supplies our needs; at death, he watches over our dissolution. In His eyes, our bodies returning to dust do not cease to be sacred objects. There are places blessed to receive them until the Day of Judgment, and Religion keeps watch near the dead like a mother near the cradle of her sleeping babe.

In His infinite solicitude, the Saviour numbered among the

[1] Matt., xvi, 18.

most meritorious works the care of burying the dead; but it is a painful work, a work repugnant to nature. Wherefore, Our Heavenly Father, afraid, so to speak, lest it should be neglected, or performed with too little respect, inspired some fervent Christians to make it their chief occupation: this was in the beginning of the fourteenth century—1309. They formed themselves into a religious community, and took the name of Cellites, that is to say—Tomb Brothers, or Burial Brothers.[1] They used to visit the sick, to lavish every kind of charitable care on them, to pray for them, to help them to die well, and to assist at their interment. They daily recited the Office of the Dead for the departed.[2]

It was especially in times of plague that they showed themselves most assiduous in the care of the sick. Lest courage should forsake them in the hour of danger, these religious, animated with a charity truly heroic, made a special vow not to quit the bedside of the victims of the terrible disease. There were also Cellite Nuns, devoted to the same works. But another duty, no less painful to nature, was reserved for the male religious alone: that of assisting criminals sentenced to death.[3]

Thus, when capital punishment becomes necessary, Religion steps in to mitigate its pains. She comforts and encourages the criminal, raises him up in his own eyes, and teaches him that the patient acceptance of a bitter death has wonderful power in disarming the divine wrath. At this supreme hour the Church knows

[1] Latin *cella*, a sepulchre, in Tertullian.

[2] In all ages and climes we find the same respect for the remains of man. Consider what is done at the present day by the hospital nuns of the *Hotel-Dieu de Paris*, whose congregation seems to reach back to the sixth century.

"Inasmuch as the burial of the dead is one of the chief works of mercy, all the sisters shall be careful not to lose the merit thereof by custom, performing an act so holy without the right interior sentiments. Let them always follow the example of the holy man Tobias, who never discharged this duty towards his captive brethren without the accompaniment of devout prayers. For this purpose, when the sisters are going to bury the dead, they shall say, either at the bedside of the dead or in the room for the dead, the *Veni Sancte*, offering their action to God, and the *De Profundis*, with the prayer *Fidelium*, for the souls of the deceased. This done, *they shall kiss with great respect the feet of the dead*, regarding their bodies as sacred vessels, temples of the Holy Ghost, which are one day to rise again all-glorious in order to reign in Heaven, since Our Lord has particularly promised the Kingdom of Heaven to the poor, and the souls of most of these poor Lazaruses, who never received anything but evil in their lifetime, shall receive crowns and rewards, not in the bosom of Abraham, like Lazarus, but in the bosom of God Himself, who will load them with so much more happiness and glory as they endured in this world pain and contempt." *Constitut.*, c. XXV.

Is this the fruit of Faith?

[3] Hélyot, t. III, p. 414

how to gain for the culprit a feeling of lively interest. She knows how to surround him with more prayers and blessings than the just man himself in his last moments. There is a Priest always at his side: gentle words, tender consolations, and fatherly embraces, the pledges of Heaven's forgiveness, make repentance sink into his heart and hope shine on his brow.

In some countries the sentence is announced to the culprit three hours before his execution. As soon as the officer of human justice has ceased to speak, the Church raises her voice. All the bells of the city ring the agony: this lasts for three hours. The mournful sound summons to the temples a multitude of people, who pray and weep in alarm at what is going to occur. The knell is over: the sorrowful procession sets out. It is led by the Brothers of the Cross, who, in the garb of penitents, with tapers in their hands, pray aloud and invite the people to pray.

There is a very touching custom in Spain. When the dreadful sentence has been pronounced, a pious member of a confraternity runs through the city begging alms for the unfortunate condemned. The offerings thus received are intended for the burial, and for the celebration of the holy mysteries. The divine sacrifice accompanies the earthly one: the blood of the Man-God mingles, so to speak, with the blood of the culprit, in order to purify him, and the Priest, casting a last look on the traveller to eternity, may point with his finger to Heaven, and cheer him with these sublime words: *My son, ascend to glory!*

It is thus that Religion ennobles and sanctifies the death of the guilty. Remembering that a criminal died near the Cross and was the first to possess the kingdom of God—beholding in the death accepted by the criminal a sorrowful confession of the justice of God—she takes away almost all the disgrace of his death, associating it with the death of the Just Man, and purifying the scaffold by the Cross.[1]

At the moment when the Cellite Brothers and the numerous congregations of contemplative religious were showing so clearly that charity and all other Christian virtues were to be found always and only in the Catholic Church—at the moment when the conflict between good and evil was leading to the great schism of the West and threatening to sink the barque of Peter—pious Christians raised their suppliant hands towards Mary; for, according to the Fathers, Mary triumphs over all heresies. St. Brigit, Princess of Sweden, was inspired to establish a Religious Order, specially destined to obtain the powerful protection of the Queen of Heaven

[1] See an execution in Rome *Trois Rome*, t. II.

God gave a manifest blessing to this holy undertaking; Mary, invoked with admirable fervour, crushed the serpent's head, and the Church was saved.

Let us give in a few words the history of St. Brigit. She was born about the year 1302, of the royal family of Sweden. Her education was intrusted to one of her aunts, whose rare virtues became the models that Brigit strove to copy as soon as she was able to understand them. From her tenderest years, she showed a great relish for all the exercises of piety. The state of marriage which she embraced by the advice of her parents, did not cause her to lose any of her fervour. Her husband falling sick, she obtained his cure by the fervour of her prayers; but sickness taught this good man the uncertainty of life and the fleeting character of all temporal things. With the consent of his wife, he retired into a monastery of Cistercians, where he died a few years afterwards in the odour of sanctity.

Brigit, being now free, renounced the rank of princess in order to devote herself entirely to penance. She divided her goods among her children; and, forgetting all that she had been in the world, made it her ambition to deserve the glorious title of servant of the poor. Charity for the suffering members of Jesus Christ, mortification, and prayer, became her sweetest delights. It was about the year 1344 that Our Lord inspired her to found an Order destined to render special honour to the Blessed Virgin. This foundation, by the way, is another proof of that admirable Providence which watches over the wants of the Church.

Here are the principal rules of this celebrated Order: they breathe the highest wisdom. The number of nuns is fixed at sixty in each convent. There should also be religious priests to administer the Sacraments to them. The nuns recite the Office of the Blessed Virgin daily. They also assist daily at a High Mass in honour of Mary, after which is sung the *Salve Regina*.

To perpetuate the true spirit of the Gospel, by imitating the Early Christians, who had only one heart and one soul, the children of St. Brigit not only place all things in common, but also observe the following practice: before beginning Vespers, and after having recited the *Ave Maria*, the Friars and Nuns ask pardon of each other. The first choir bows profoundly towards the second, saying, *Pardon us for the love of God and His most holy Mother, if we have offended you by word, deed, or sign; as for us, if you have offended us in any way, we willingly pardon you.* The second choir bows in turn, and repeats the same words. The fasts are frequent, the clothing poor, and the silence almost continual.

When any of these religious die, others are received in their

stead. The garments of the deceased are distributed in alms, and, until their places are filled up, the extra food is given to the poor. Every year, before the Feast of All Saints, a calculation is made of the expenses of the coming year, and whatever surplus is found in provisions or money is distributed among the poor on the day after All Saints, so that the Order never possesses anything but what is strictly necessary.

In the cemetery of each convent there is always a grave open. The Abbess and Nuns must daily go thither. After a few moments of prayer and recollection, the Abbess throws into the grave a little clay. At the entrance to the church there is a bier and a coffin, that all who pass by may remember that they have one day to die. What wholesome thoughts do such objects inspire! Since we removed from our houses, and even from our churches, whatever recalls the idea of death, have we become more attentive in prayer or more detached from perishable things?

After establishing her Order, St. Brigit undertook some journeys of devotion, spreading everywhere around her the good odour of Jesus Christ, as well as the worship of Mary. Nothing more remarkable than her revelations! Their chief object is to give the particulars of Our Lord's sufferings, and of the revolutions that are to occur in certain kingdoms. Sovereign Pontiffs have found nothing in them contrary to Catholic doctrine: they have even declared that *one may piously believe* them, though not articles of faith. Full of days and merits, St. Brigit died in Rome on the 23rd of July, 1373.[1]

The sanctity of which the religious orders set an example in the retirement of the cloister or among the people, St. Elzear displayed in the world, amid the upper classes of society. This new apologist of the Catholic Church, this model of masters and of persons engaged in the married state, was born, in 1295, at Robians, near the castle of Ansois, in the diocese of Apt. He was of the illustrious and ancient house of Sabran, in Provence. He had scarcely entered the world when his mother, surnamed the *Good Countess*, by reason of her charity and virtues, took him in her arms, and offered him to God, whom she implored to remove him out of this world after his baptism rather than ever permit him to sully the purity of his soul by sin. The young Elzear showed from his childhood a singular love for the miserable: he used often to share his dinner with poor children. He was taught the sciences by his uncle, William of Sabran, Abbot of the celebrated monastery of St. Victor at Marseilles.

[1] Hélyot, t. I, p. 25; Godescard, Oct. 8.

Well grounded in piety and mortification, Elzear, at the age of fourteen years, was married to Delphina de Glandèves, who was only sixteen. But the young couple engaged by mutual consent to live as brother and sister, united only by the bonds of the most tender charity. The austerities practised in Lent by these two angelic beings recalled the lives of the holy penitents of the Primitive Church.

Elzear was only twenty-three years old when death deprived him of his virtuous parents. Inheriting their property, he regarded it as a means with which Providence had furnished him to relieve the wants of the poor and to promote the glory of God. The possession of an immense fortune could not turn him aside for a moment from the pursuit of eternal goods. He daily recited the Office of the Church, and frequently communicated during the course of each week. But his piety had nothing sad in it: a man more cheerful or agreeable in conversation could not be found. He was brave in war, active and prudent in peace. Watchful over his inferiors, he discharged most faithfully the duties of his state.

When he had retired to his castle of Pui-Michael, he drew up a rule for his house, and wished that it should be strictly followed every day. We shall extract its chief articles for the use of masters and mistresses. Why might they not, with a few modifications, required by special circumstances, adopt it for their servants? Has the Gospel changed? Is not the command of St. Paul still obligatory: *If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel?*[1] But, to secure the observance of this rule, he must himself set an example thereof.

1. Let all persons in my family hear Mass daily, whatsoever their business. If God is well served in a house, there will be nothing wanting to it.

2. If any one of my servants swear or blaspheme, he shall be severely punished. Could I endure near me those infamous mouths that throw poison into hearts?

3. Let all respect modesty. The least impurity in word or deed shall never pass unpunished in the house of Elzear.

4. Men and women must go to Confession every week. Let none be so unfortunate as to be absent from Communion on the Chief Festivals of the year.

5. I want no idleness about my house. In the morning let all say their prayers fervently to God, and make an offering of themselves to Him, with all their actions during the day. Men and women shall then go to their work.

[1] 1 *Tim.*, v, 8.

6. I will have no games of hazard. It is not my intention that my castle should be a cloister, nor my people hermits. They shall be free to enjoy themselves, provided they do nothing that their conscience condemns.

7. If any dispute arise, I wish the precept of the Apostle to be inviolably observed, and a reconciliation to be effected before the sun goes down. To be unwilling to forgive others is diabolical conduct. To love one's enemies and to return good for evil are the characteristics of the children of God. When I meet with servants of this class, I will always open my house, my purse, and my heart to them.

8. Every evening my family shall meet at a conference, wherein something shall be said of God, salvation, or the means to gain Heaven. There is no affair that concerns me so much as the salvation of those who serve me.

9. I forbid all my officers, under the most severe penalties, to do the least wrong to anyone in his property or honour, to oppress the poor, to ruin the neighbour, no matter what the pretext may be of maintaining my rights.

The example of Elzear was a practical explanation of this rule.

Delphina entered into all the views of her husband, and paid him the most perfect obedience. The pious countess was aware that the practices of religion suitable for a married woman differ from those of a nun, and that the former ought not to separate the contemplative from the active life. She disposed of her moments so well that she complied with all her duties. Kind, gentle, industrious, watchful, she was honoured as a mother by all those engaged in her service; and she loved them as her children. Her conduct proved the truth of the maxim that virtuous mistresses make virtuous servants, and that the families of Saints are the families of God.

Having been named guardian to the young King of Naples, Elzear was made the chief man of the council of the regency, and, as such, was laden with nearly all the important affairs of the kingdom. The Saint, seeing the poor neglected, asked of the young prince the favour of being appointed their advocate. "What an office you ask of me!" replied the young prince, laughing, "you need not be afraid of competitors: I grant your request, and place under your protection all the poor of the kingdom." Elzear got a bag made, and, carrying it about through the streets, dropped into it all the petitions of the miserable. He listened to their complaints, distributed alms among them, and left none unconsoled. He took on himself the pleading of the causes of widows and orphans, and obtained justice for them.

After spending a number of years in this employment, Elzear returned to France, and died in Paris on the 27th of September, 1323. Delphina, who survived him forty-three years, continued his example of virtue on earth, and then went to share his crown in Heaven. The Church, attentive to the voice of miracles, placed both on her altars: could she offer to people of the world any more perfect models?

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having, by the splendour of so many virtues, defended the Church, Thy true Spouse, against the scandals and false virtues of heretics. Grant us the grace to practise the duties of our state like SS. Elzear and Delphina.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will visit the sick.*

LESSON XLIV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FOURTEENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church consoled: St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal; Martyrs of Lithuania; St. John Nepomucen. The Church afflicted: Great Schism of the West. The Church consoled: Mission of John de Montcorvin; Conversion of a Part of Tartary, Persia, and Bulgaria; Conversion of Lithuania.

In 1311, the Fifteenth General Council, held at Vienne in France, condemned the errors of the sectaries, reformed morals, and promoted the advancement of learning by the establishment of chairs for eastern languages in the universities. Thus appeared the influence and the solicitude of the Church. Her unchangeable sanctity shone forth with no less brilliancy. It was to be seen in the courts of princes, and even on the throne, as well as in the humblest conditions of society. The true religion, proving hereby that it is always full of life, closed the mouths of the sectaries, and made all those who embraced error inexcusable.

Among the most illustrious Saints of the fourteenth century, we must rank St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal. It may be said that with this princess all virtues ascended the throne. A daughter of Peter III., King of Aragon, she was born in 1271, and called Elizabeth from St. Elizabeth of Hungary, her aunt. She was brought up by her grandfather, James I., surnamed the *Saint* on

account of his virtues and the *Conqueror* on account of the capture of Majorca and Valencia. When dying, he left his little granddaughter penetrated with the most sublime maxims of piety, though she was not yet fully ten years old.

Care had been taken to let none near Elizabeth but virtuous persons, whose example might serve her as a continual lesson. The young princess had a most sweet disposition: she delighted only in things worthy of an immortal soul, things which would lead to God. A greater pleasure could not be done her than to take her to church. From the age of eight years she practised mortification, and the poor called her their little mother.

Married to Denis, King of Portugal, the new Esther was not dazzled by the splendour of human glory. She made a wise division of her time, so as to unite the duties of piety with those of her state. She rose very early every day. After a meditation sufficiently long, she heard Mass, at which she used often to communicate. She daily recited the Office of the Blessed Virgin and the Office of the Dead. She had hours set apart for pious reading and for the affairs of her house, as well as for the fulfilment of her own duties towards her neighbour. Her work consisted in making ornaments for churches or clothes for the poor: she was assisted herein by ladies of honour. Thus there was not a moment left her for useless conversation or frivolous amusement.

By her care poor strangers were provided with a lodging and everything else necessary for them. She drew up an exact list of the bashful poor, and supplied them privately with means to live in a manner becoming their state. Poor girls, so often in danger of offending God, obtained from her liberality a marriage dowry according to their condition. She seemed to exist only for the miserable. Such a variety of concerns did not prevent her from attending to her other duties.

She loved and respected her husband. She was submissive to him, and patiently bore with his defects. With some excellent qualities Denis joined violent passions. Elizabeth, deeply grieved at the offence to God and the scandal resulting therefrom, prayed assiduously and got others to pray for his conversion. Moreover, she adopted the infallible means which all wives ought to adopt, if they wish to succeed: she endeavoured to touch her husband's heart by gentleness, and patiently made amends for his disorders. Her great motto was, TO SUFFER, TO BE EMPLOYED, TO PRAY, AND TO BE SILENT.

She took it from St. Clotilda, who had herself inherited it from St. Monica. Christian wives! you who sincerely desire the conversion of your husbands, if it is permitted to offer you an advice,

adopt this motto, or, if you choose, this traditional *recipe*. Beseech God to engrave it in burning letters on your heart; meditate every morning on it at the foot of your crucifix; make it the invariable rule of your conduct: there is no doubt of its success. Remember that you are strong only by an angelic meekness. Reproaches, complaints, quarrels, ill humour, simply make the evil worse. The conduct of Elizabeth opened her husband's eyes: he renounced his disorders. His natural virtues, developed by religion, shone with new splendour, and he became the glory and idol of his subjects. It was but a short time before his conversion that an event happened of which we shall now speak.

Elizabeth had an exceedingly virtuous page, whom she employed in the distribution of her private alms. Another page, jealous of the favour that he enjoyed on account of his virtue, resolved to ruin him. In order to succeed herein, he laid the most odious imputations on him. Denis, inclined to think ill of others, believed the calumny, and formed the design of taking the supposed culprit's life. Having called a lime-burner, he said to him, "I will send you a page, who will ask you whether you have executed the king's orders: this is the sign by which you shall know him. You shall then take him and throw him into the kiln, there to be burned. He deserves death, having justly incurred my indignation."

On the day appointed, the virtuous page is sent to the lime-kiln. Passing by a church, he goes in to adore Our Lord. Not content with assisting at a Mass that has begun, he remains to hear another. Meanwhile the king, impatient to know what has occurred, sends the informer to inquire whether his orders have been executed. The lime-burner, supposing this page to be the one mentioned by the king, lays hold of him and throws him into the kiln, where he is immediately consumed. The queen's page, after satisfying his devotion, continues his journey, reaches the kiln, and asks if the king's orders have been executed. He is answered in the affirmative, and returns to the palace to give an account of his commission. The king was greatly amazed on beholding an arrival so unexpected; but, when he heard the particulars of the event, he adored the judgments of God, acknowledged the innocence of the page, and ever afterwards respected the virtue and sanctity of the queen.

Like all enlightened and truly Christian wives, Elizabeth, who had made the conversion of her husband her chief care, neglected no means to procure him a holy death. The king falling sick, she redoubled her zeal, and gave him the most signal marks of affection. Her courageous tenderness kept her continually near his

pillow: she took the utmost pains to serve him. Her great object being to help him to die well, she distributed abundant alms and secured prayers on all sides with the intention of obtaining this grace for him. God heard His humble handmaid. The king, during the whole course of his sickness, gave proof of the most sincere repentance, and died in peace.

Having become a widow, Elizabeth no longer lived but, after God, for her children, among whom she took care to maintain peace and charity, and for the poor, who experienced more than ever the effects of her bounty. Being seized, at the age of sixty-five years, with a slight fever, she foretold the hour of her death, confessed several times, and received the Holy Viaticum on her knees and at the foot of the altar, and then the sacrament of Extreme Unction. The worthy daughter of Mary showed the most tender devotion towards her mother. Hence, she seemed full of joy when the Heavenly Bridegroom called her to the eternal nuptials: this was on the 4th of July, 1336. Splendid miracles bore witness to the sublimity of her virtues; and the Church was able to oppose to the sectaries this illustrious princess—the daughter of a king, the wife of a king, the mother of a king—as a new monument of her unchangeable sanctity.

Other defenders, still more eloquent, were given to the Church. A testimony of blood was rendered to the sanctity of her morals, to the truth of her dogmas, and to the divinity of her origin and her institutions: the fourteenth century had its martyrs. Children of the Catholic Church! it was for you, it was for you, that they fought: a homage of gratitude is due to them! Turn your eyes towards the North; behold in Lithuania these three young men on whose brow already shines a ray of immortal light: they are named Antony, John, and Eustachius. The two first are brothers, born in Lithuania of a most illustrious family. All three are chamberlains to Olgerd, Grand Duke of Lithuania and father of the famous Jagellon. Why they were put to death I am now going to tell you.

Brought up in the religion of their country, they adored no other deity than fire; but, having had the happiness of coming to a knowledge of the truth, they were converted to Christianity and received Baptism. A refusal to eat meats forbidden on a fast day cost them their liberty and their lives. They were cast into prison by orders of the Grand Duke, who condemned them, after severe tortures, to be put to death. Eustachius, the youngest of the three, passed through frightful sufferings. His body was beaten with heavy clubs, his legs were broken, and the hair and skin of his head were torn off violently. These three Saints underwent martyrdom at Wilna, about the year 1342. They were hung on a

large oak that served as a gibbet for malefactors; but after them no others were hung on it. The Christians bought from the prince both the tree and the ground, and in the course of time built a church there. We shall soon see that the blood of these martyrs was not unfruitful.

Let us leave Lithuania to enter Germany. Here a new witness is going to seal with his blood that Faith which we profess, and to vindicate from the calumnies of the impious one of the most sacred dogmas of the Catholic Church. On the imperial throne was a prince whom history has branded with the odious surnames of the *Sluggard* and the *Drunkard*. His name was Wenceslas, and he resided in the city of Prague. Not far from this was born, in 1330, a child who received the name John in baptism, and the surname Nepomucen, because of the city Nepomuc in which he had seen the light. Scarcely had he attained to life when it seemed necessary for him to part with it; but he was snatched from the arms of death by the protection of the Mother of God, whom his parents implored in the church of a Cistercian monastery, situated in the neighbourhood. Full of gratitude, they consecrated their son to her who had just restored him to them, and spared nothing to give him an excellent education.

Advancing in piety and virtue as he advanced in age, John Nepomucen received the title of doctor in theology and canon law in the celebrated University of Prague, the sister and rival of the Universities of Paris and Padua. From his earliest years he had felt a strong inclination for the ecclesiastical state: he had directed all his studies to this end, and made a novitiate for it, by frequently approaching the Holy Table. Scarcely had he received the sacred unction, when he was commanded to turn to account the rare talent with which he had been endowed for preaching: all the city hastened to hear him. The students, to the number of four thousand, ran in crowds to his sermons, and the fruits of salvation were wonderful. The Archbishop of Prague, anxious to secure to himself a man so full of the Spirit of God, gave him a canonry which had lately become vacant.

Wenceslas heard of the merits of the servant of God, wished to know him personally, and asked him to preach the Advent at court. John felt how difficult such a task would be. Nevertheless, he accepted it, and the emperor, touched by the holy man's discourses, checked for some time his irregular passions.

About the same time he offered him a bishopric, which the Saint refused, as well as another dignity, to which there were considerable revenues attached. But the more John despised the greatness of the world, the more God permitted the world to esteem him

The empress, Wenceslas's wife, was a lady adorned with all virtues. Moved by the unction that accompanied the sermons of John Nepomucen, she chose him for the director of her conscience. She was not the only one to place herself under the guidance of the servant of God: all the virtuous persons of the court also besought him to take charge of their souls. Everyone admired in him a rare talent for forming Saints on the throne, teaching people to be happy in the midst of sufferings, and making the Gospel loved and practised in the highest circles, where it is so often despised.

Meanwhile a design, as new as it was extravagant, crossed the mind of the brutal Wenceslas: it was to extort from John Nepomucen the confession of the empress. He sent accordingly for the man of God, and began by putting indirect questions to him; then, raising the mask, he explained himself more clearly. John, seized with horror, represented to him in the most respectful terms how much the design that he had formed would shock reason and wound religion; but he was not to be heard. Wenceslas, unable to obtain any satisfaction, cast the Saint into a dungeon.

Some time afterwards he drew him out, and even invited him to table. The repast over, Wenceslas dismissed all others who were present, and, remaining alone with the servant of God, redoubled his efforts to make him disclose the confession of the empress. The Saint answered as before that he was bound to an inviolable silence by all natural, divine, and human laws, and that nothing would ever induce him to be a traitor to his duty. The emperor, seeing that all his gentle endeavours were in vain, could no longer restrain the transports of his rage. He ordered the Saint to be taken back to prison, and to be treated with the utmost inhumanity. The officers stretched him on a kind of rack, applied lighted torches to his sides, burned him at a slow fire, and otherwise tortured him most barbarously.

In the midst of his pains, John Nepomucen uttered not a word more than the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. At length he was removed from the rack, but he was almost at death's door. Wenceslas summoned him again into his presence. "Take your choice," he said: "either die, or reveal the confession of the empress." The Saint made no reply: his silence conveyed his thoughts. Wenceslas was not mistaken regarding them. "Away with this man out of my sight," he exclaimed, "and throw him into the river as soon as it is dark, that the people may know nothing of his fate!"

The holy man spent the few hours that were left to him in preparing for his sacrifice. Night having come, he was thrown, bound hand and foot, into the Muldaw, from the bridge that joins Great and Little Prague. This happened on the eve of the Ascension, which was the 16th of May, 1383.

Scarcely had the martyr been suffocated under the water, when his body, floating on the river, was surrounded by a heavenly light, which attracted a multitude of spectators. The empress, who knew nothing of what had occurred, ran to Wenceslas to ask him the cause of the light that she had seen from her room. Struck with terror, the tyrant returned no answer. Eager to hide his shame and alarm, he immediately fled to a country residence, whither he forbade anyone to follow him. At daybreak the mystery was cleared up, and the executioners themselves let out the prince's secret.

All the city ran to secure the holy body. The canons of the cathedral went in procession, and carried it away to the church o the Holy Cross: many sick persons recovered their health during its removal. Thus died John Nepomucen, justly reckoned among the martyrs. This last title is so much the more glorious to him as the secret of confession, to which he was indebted for it, having never excited the fury of tyrants, had not yet obtained a victim.

The testimony of the blood of the martyr of Prague was necessary to vindicate the Church from the calumnies of her enemies, and to console her for the schism that was rending her bosom. This deplorable occurrence is known under the name of the *Great Schism of the West*. Let us tell the occasion of it. Several Popes had fixed their abode at Avignon. Italy, and Rome in particular, suffered much from the absence of the Sovereign Pontiffs. After the death of Gregory IX., the Roman people, fearing that the new Pope, if a Frenchman, would also go and reside at Avignon, flocked round the place where the Cardinals had assembled, and began to cry out, *We want a Roman Pope*. To these seditious cries, were added threats. The election of the Pope, who took the name of Urban VI., was made in a hurry; later on, parties pretended that it was null, and another Pope was set up under the name of Clement VII. Thus Christendom found itself divided between two Pontiffs. Yet this schism, afflicting as it was, did not, perhaps, hurt consciences as much as other scandals less grave in appearance.

Such is the reflection of St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, while writing a short time afterwards. "People thought," he says, "that they were in good faith and with a safe conscience on both sides; for, though it is necessary to believe that there is only one visible head of the Church, if it happens, nevertheless, that two Sovereign Pontiffs are created at the same time, it is not necessary to believe that this one or that one is the lawful Pope. We are only to believe that the true Pope is he who has been canonically elected, and the people are not obliged to decide which

is this Pope. Everyone may follow herein the conduct and opinion of his own Pastor."

It must be added that the succession of Vicars of Jesus Christ was no more interrupted during the schism than it is at the death of a Pope. What essentially constitutes the apostolic chain and succession is perpetuity of doctrine. Now, all *true* Popes who preceded or followed *doubtful* Popes had the same teaching; and these alone were unquestionably the Vicars of Jesus Christ and the successors of Peter. The great design of God, which is the sanctification of the elect, was no less accomplished in the midst of this afflicting division: there were Saints under both obediences. In so deep a sorrow, the Church was not left without consolation. Heresy had taken away some children unworthy of their mother. Behold how thousands of others run to throw themselves into her bosom!

The blood of the three martyrs of Lithuania, of whom we spoke above, was a seed of new Christians. A humble religious of St. Francis, who under his coarse garb concealed the bravery of a hero and the zeal of an apostle, Friar John de Montcorvin, was sent as a missionary into the East. He set out on foot, staff in hand, with no other support than Providence, and penetrated as far as Northern China, after crossing Tartary and Persia, and visiting a portion of the Indies. He was the bearer of a letter from the Pope to the emperor. Let us hear this great missionary relating his journey himself.

"After spending three months in the Indies, in the Church of St. Thomas, I reached the kingdom of Cathai (that is, Northern China). I presented myself before the emperor, who is called the Great Khan, and invited him, according to the Pope's letters, to embrace the Christian Religion; but he is too hardened in idolatry. Nevertheless, he does much good to Christians. During the eleven years that I have been on this mission, I have built a church in the city of Cambalu, which is the king's chief place of residence. I finished it six years ago. I have also put up a steeple, with three bells. I have baptised, I think, fully six thousand persons. A king of the country, named Georges, attached himself to me the first year that I came here, and, being converted, received minor orders, and served me at Mass, clad in his royal robes. He converted a great many of his subjects, and built a magnificent church in honour of the Holy Trinity: he called it the Roman Church. I also baptised a hundred and fifty children, who now say the office with me. I ring the bells for all the hours, but we chant by rote, not having marked books. I am already old, and have grown gray by labours and afflictions rather than by age, since I am only fifty-

eight. I have translated into the Tartar language all the New Testament and the Psalter: I teach and preach publicly the Law of Jesus Christ."

The Sovereign Pontiff, on hearing of the progress of the Faith in the East, was filled with joy. He charged Gonsalva, then General of the Friars Minor, to select at once seven learned and virtuous religious of the Order, that they might be consecrated Bishops and sent into Tartary. The Vicar of Jesus Christ adds in his letter: "Considering the great things which Friar John de Montcorvin has done by the help of grace in Tartary, and is still doing there, we have made him Archbishop of the large city of Cambalu, intrusting to him the guidance of all the souls in the dominions of the Tartars."

Religion soon penetrated into Persia, where the Sovereign Pontiff established new bishoprics. While these consolations were coming to the Church, other children of St. Francis were making innumerable conversions in Bulgaria. In a hundred and sixty days, they baptised more than two hundred thousand persons; and, that there might be no doubt of the number, the king caused the names of all the baptised to be entered on the public registers.

Immortal Spouse of the Man-God, Holy Church! rejoice for the children who have come to thee, and for those who are just about to come to thee: a new gem will soon be added to thy crown, and Lithuania itself will show the protection of its martyrs!

The inhabitants of this country used to adore a fire that they imagined perpetual. They also adored woods and serpents. Jagellon, King of Poland, having visited Lithuania in 1387, convoked an assembly at Wilna for Ash Wednesday. In concert with the nobles and the Bishops who accompanied him, he endeavoured to induce the Lithuanians to recognise the true God and to embrace the Christian Religion; but they maintained that it would be impious to forsake their gods and to give up the customs of their forefathers. Then Jagellon, to show them that they would forsake not the truth but absurd errors, ordered the perpetual fire kept in Wilna to be put out. He also caused, in presence of the barbarians, the temple and altar for sacrificing victims to be demolished, the sacred groves to be cut down, and the serpents honoured in every house as gods to be killed.

The barbarians, seeing their religion thus destroyed, contented themselves with weeping and lamenting, for they durst not oppose the commands of the king. They expected indeed to see their god avenge his own cause; but, no evil befalling those who obeyed the prince, they opened their eyes to the light and asked for Baptism. Polish Priests instructed them for some days on the articles of

Faith, and taught them the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; but he who laboured most effectually for their conversion was the king himself. Like St. Stephen of Hungary, this great man thought that the glory of a monarch is to civilise the people intrusted to his care, and he was not ignorant that civilisation is the daughter of Faith. The Lithuanian nobles were baptised one after another. With regard to the people, as it would have been an immense labour to baptise each person separately, they were baptised by aspersion.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the constant protection which Thou hast shown to Thy Church. It is for us that Thou dost defend and console her. Grant us the grace to listen humbly to her maternal voice.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will faithfully observe the Commandments of the Church.*

LESSON XLV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FIFTEENTH CENTURY.)

The Church attacked: Wickliffe, John Huss, Kiska. The Church defended: Council of Constance; St. Vincent Ferrer; St. Casimir; Order of the Voluntary Poor; Confraternity of Mercy. *Monts-de-Piété.*

THE fifteenth century, into which we enter to-day, offers us, on a grander scale, a view of the everlasting war of Hell against the Church, of evil against good, of error against truth, of the flesh against the spirit.

On the side of Hell, the means of assault are these: (*a*) a continuation of the Great Schism of the West; (*b*) Wickliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague; (*c*) frightful scandals, the consequences of heresy; (*d*) the loss of Faith among a portion of the Christian populations in East and West; and (*e*) the restoration of Paganism.

To prevent or repair the evil, God opposes: (*a*) thirty-seven Religious Orders or Congregations; (*b*) a General Council; (*c*) Great Saints in all classes of society; and (*d*) the conquest of new peoples.

The heresies of the preceding century, joined with the deplorable schism that was desolating the West, had weakened among the peoples their respect for pontifical authority, and scattered everywhere the principles of rebellion against the Church. To

produce the most dangerous sects, these principles had only to fall into a head that could give them a systematic arrangement and a specious colouring. This head was found: it was that of Wickliffe. Enraged at having been dismissed from a position that he occupied in the University of Oxford, this English priest first let himself loose against the monks, and then against the Sovereign Pontiff, whom he regarded as the authors of his disgrace. In his writings and his sermons, he openly attacked the Church, her authority, her Sacraments, and her ceremonies. The Clergy of England rose in a body against the innovator, condemned him, and obliged him to quit his charge.[1]

The writings of Wickliffe, carried into Germany, heated the minds of such persons as were indisposed towards the clergy. John Huss, a Bohemian priest, of haughty and intriguing character, adopted the declaration of the English raver, and set himself to dogmatise against the Church. One of Huss's disciples, Jerome of Prague, so called from the place of his birth, loudly proclaimed the doctrine of his master. The corruption of his heart had led him into heresy: pride held him therein till his death.

To these three heretics God opposed a great many Catholic doctors assembled in the Council of Constance, and the decision of this Council. Among the defenders of the truth shone Cardinal d'Ailly, surnamed the *Hammer of Heretics*, and his disciple, the celebrated Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris.[2] Triumphantly refuted by Catholic theologians, the innovators were condemned, in 1414-1417, by the Council of Constance, the same that suppressed the use of Holy Communion under both species among the simple Faithful: we gave the reason for this when speaking of the Eucharist.[3]

Wickliffe died miserably in England. John Huss and Jerome of Prague were burned alive by command of the Emperor Sigismund.

When reference is made to this matter, the impious, with their usual candour and learning, are not slow to rail against the Church. To estimate the value of their accusations, it is enough to know that the Council of Constance decreed nothing against heretics, against John Huss in particular, save degradation from the ecclesiastical state, and the suppression of their writings. Whatever happened over and above was the work of the civil power. This power gave a passport to John Huss only that he might have

[1] St. Liguori, in treating of the *Heresies of the Fourteenth Century*, remarks that the University of Oxford condemned two hundred and sixty propositions extracted from Wickliffe's works. (*Tr.*)

[2] Yet on several points the teaching of these two doctors is far from being irreprehensible.

[3] Vol. II, Lesson xxxvi.

an opportunity of justifying himself before the Council, and on condition of his submitting thereto in case that his doctrine should be judged heretical, as John Huss himself declared.

Now, this man failing to keep his word, the Emperor Sigismund thought that it would be contrary to all the rules of wisdom, religion, and sound policy, to expose the people to the danger of being seduced by a fanatic, who announced that he would dogmatise as long as he had a breath of life in him. If the arm of justice was stretched out over his head, whom had he to blame? How long is it since pride and rebellion became titles to mercy?

Ziska, a disciple of Huss, being informed of his master's death, put himself at the head of several thousand other madmen, and laid waste not only Bohemia but nearly all Germany. Heresy showed itself what it always was, a source of misfortunes for the people. At this time it covered Bohemia and a portion of Germany with ashes, with the ruins of villages, monasteries, and towns; it deluged them with human blood. The desolation was such that the Emperor Sigismund had to send into the country an army for the dispersion of the Hussites.

The Council of Constance also terminated the Great Schism of the West, by the nomination of Martin V., who was recognised by the whole Church as the only and true Pope, the successor of St. Peter. However, the heretics had said, in the fierceness of their hatred, that the Catholic Church was not the true depositary of the Faith. In order to close their mouths, Our Lord was pleased, during this century, to show that our Mother had not ceased to be His lawful spouse; that in her alone He placed all His delights; that she alone perpetuated the work of the redemption; and, lastly, that she alone gave Him children really virtuous, since their virtues were sanctioned by splendid miracles.

One of those men whom God was pleased to set before the eyes of all Europe for half a century, that they might vindicate the Catholic Church, confound heresy, and prepare the world for the end of time, was St. Vincent Ferrer. This Angel of the Apocalypse was born at Valencia, in Spain, on the 23rd of January, 1357. His father and mother were very commendable for their piety and love of the poor. Generous-hearted Christians, they spent in alms whatever was left of their income at the end of each year.

Vincent showed from his childhood a tender devotion towards Jesus Suffering, as well as towards the Blessed Virgin, whom he always honoured as his mother. All the poor were his friends, and this determined his parents on making him the dispenser of their charities. God wished that the young Christian hero should early serve his apprenticeship to life, and, in order to prove his

virtue, let him be assailed by violent temptations. The arms that Vincent opposed thereto were prayer, mortification, and a constant watchfulness over all his senses. Having joined the Dominicans, he received the sacerdotal unction, and preached with such extraordinary zeal and fruit that the Sovereign Pontiff appointed him apostolic preacher.[1]

In this character, Vincent made missions into Spain, France, Germany, Italy, and England. To add more weight to his words, God imparted to him the gift of miracles. Among others, he raised a dead man to life at Salamanca; and, in Catalonia, he restored the use of his limbs to a cripple, named John Soler, whose cure had been declared by the physicians impossible. During many years, there was ample opportunity of testing the truth of this latter miracle; for Soler, a man of superior merit, was elevated to the episcopal chair of Barcelona. To this gift of miracles, which we may term transitory, was added a permanent gift, that of languages. Like the Apostles, the Saint, speaking in his mother tongue, was understood by all the people whom he addressed.

The holy missionary led a very austere life, notwithstanding his innumerable journeys and the fatigues inseparable from them. He never used animal food; he fasted every day except Sunday. On Wednesday and Friday, he took nothing but bread and water. This course he pursued for forty years. Straw or twigs served him as a bed. His zeal and humility were equal to his mortification. He spent a great part of the day in the confessional, where he finished what he had begun in the pulpit. He always refused ecclesiastical dignities, and all the positions offered him in his Order.

Passing through France, he preached at Nevers and Bourges, and in Dauphiné. Here he learned that the inhabitants of a valley, called the *Valley of Corruption*, were abandoned to most infamous disorders. They were of such a sensual and savage disposition that no missionary durst go near them. Vincent, ready to suffer all things for the glory of God, undertook to save them even at the cost of his own life. His labours were not in vain. These poor wretches, with hearts touched and minds enlightened, detested their crimes, and repaired them by a true conversion. The change was such that the valley took the name of *Valpure*, or Valley of Purity.

[1] The Saint preached daily on the Last Judgment, and passed for the Angel of the Apocalypse, charged to announce it. The resurrection of a dead man confirmed his words. In point of fact, the judgment of God on Europe, the end of Christian Europe *socially*, began with the Renaissance (or Revival of Paganism), thirty-three years after the death of the Thaumaturgus. See his Life, and also our work, *Where are we going?*

God alone knows the multitude of sinners and heretics brought back into the way of virtue and truth by the preaching of Vincent. He himself said, in a letter to his general, that he had had the happiness of converting nearly all the heretics in the districts that he visited.

The reputation that he enjoyed struck the King of the Moors in Spain. Mahometan as he was, this prince desired to see a man so extraordinary, and invited him to his court. The Saint embarked at Marseilles, in order to comply with the request. Scarcely had he reached Granada, when he began to preach the Gospel. Many Mahometans were already converted, when the great of the kingdom, alarmed at the losses daily sustained by their religion, besought the king to send Vincent away. The Saint went and exercised his zeal in other parts of Spain, and soon returned to France.

Touraine and Brittany became the chief scenes of his preaching and miracles. In France as in Spain the people rushed in crowds to his instructions. A wonderful thing in the life of this wonderful man: those who had heard him, sometimes to the number of ten or fifteen thousand, would follow him to other places where he was to preach, that they might hear him again! The number of souls that he converted could not, we repeat, be counted. According to the most careful reckoning, there were two hundred thousand heretics, eighty thousand Mahometans, twenty-five thousand Jews, and a host of sinful men and women, brought back to virtue and truth. Such were the fruits of his preaching.[1] His words electrified Europe, and shook it to its centre, as, a century later on, those of Francis Xavier moved the Indies and Japan.

Meanwhile the day was drawing near when the holy apostle should reap in Heaven what he had sown on earth. He fell sick in Brittany. Having reached Vannes, he felt his fever increasing, and foretold that he should die in ten days. As a matter of fact, the tenth day having come, he caused the Passion of Our Saviour to be read for him, and recited the Seven Penitential Psalms; after which he calmly expired. This occurred on the Wednesday before Palm Sunday: it was the 5th of April, 1419. He was sixty-two years of age. The Saint reduced all the rules of perfection to three, namely, to avoid all external distractions, caused by superfluous cares; to preserve the soul from the influence of pride; and to banish all inordinate affection for sensible things.[2] How do we act?

The true Church, which, through the ministry of St. Vincent,

[1] See the Bollandists.

[2] Guillon, t. XXV, p 256; Godes., April 5. On the Providential Mission of St. Vincent Ferrer, see our work. *Où allons-nous?*

showed her power by bringing back to her maternal bosom a multitude of stray sheep, showed it also by placing the holy virtues which she teaches on the steps of the throne. Every century presents us with illustrious Saints in the lower and the higher orders of society, in cloisters and in courts, in the hut and on the throne: is not this a fact well worthy of notice? Can Religion tell us in more eloquent terms that she is strong enough to sanctify all conditions? What excuse, then, is left for your tepidity?

Thus we see, during the course of the fifteenth century, a young prince shining more brightly in the world by his virtues than by his birth or natural qualities. This young prince was St. Casimir, son of Casimir III., King of Poland. He flourished in the midst of the corruption of the world, like a lily among thorns, without losing in the least the admirable purity of his morals. Love for the poor and devotion to Mary were his characteristic virtues. To show his filial confidence in the Queen of Heaven, he composed in her honour a hymn which bears his name, and he wished at his death to have a copy of it laid in his tomb.

He was only thirteen years old when the Hungarians, informed of his excellent qualities and rare virtues, offered the throne of their nation to him, instead of Matthias, their king, with whom they were dissatisfied. To please his father, the Saint set out. But, having learned that the Sovereign Pontiff disapproved of the step taken by the Hungarians, he returned to Poland, where he occupied himself in deserving a more splendid throne than that of Hungary: all his cares tended to the sanctification of his soul. Ripe for Heaven, though still very young, he died at Wilna on the 4th of March, 1483, aged twenty-four years. St. Casimir is the patron of the Poles, and the model of all young people anxious to preserve the most beautiful as well as the most delicate of the virtues.[1]

If, from the higher classes of society, we descend to the lower, we shall find other evidences of the sanctifying powers of the Catholic Church. The followers of Wickliffe and Huss, like their predecessors the Waldenses and Albigenses, pretended that they were the true Church. In order to prove it, they made profession of a great detachment from all things; but, in compensation for this, they were strongly attached to their own opinions. Outwardly, they practised the evangelical counsels; but, in reality, they were only whitened sepulchres, full of rottenness and corruption. Their apparent sanctity was a most dangerous snare. Woe to those who let themselves be caught therein: the poison of heresy soon reached their hearts!

In order to baffle this new scheme of the devil, God raised up

[1] Godes., 4th March.

in the fifteenth century, as in the previous ones, true disciples of the Gospel, who opposed solid virtues to the deceitful virtues of the sectaries, and showed that all the good works of which heresy boasted were far more perfectly practised by the children of the Catholic Church. Thus, a great many of the Faithful were to be seen giving their goods to the poor, and earning their bread in the sweat of their brow; devoting their time to prayer; and, in short, practising all the evangelical counsels. Hence sprang up many religious orders: among them, the *Voluntary Poor*.

The origin of this congregation reaches back to the twelfth century, but it was not raised to the rank of a religious order till the fifteenth, that is to say, in 1470. Its chief end was, as we have said, to show that the Catholic Church alone is the mother of all virtues, as she alone is the pillar of truth. Accordingly, neither the religious nor the order itself possessed any revenues. Wholly abandoned to that Providence which feeds the little birds and gives life to whatever breathes, they lived on from day to day. In the morning they knew not what they should have for dinner, nor even whether they should have anything.

After long and fervent prayers, they would daily go about in twos, according to the directions of their superior, begging alms through the city. They went barefoot. In their left hand they carried a beads; their right was supported by a staff five feet long, with a crucifix on the top. Their right arm held a basket for receiving the alms. Their dress consisted of a black habit, fastened with a cincture, and a kind of gray cloak with a hood. It was in this poor garb that men whose birth and wealth would have secured them an easy life and a distinguished position in the world, were not ashamed to appear. An eloquent lesson! one that confounded heresy, by eclipsing the false virtues of the sectaries, and inspired Catholics with a salutary disregard for earthly possessions.

On returning to their monastery, they partook in common of what had been given them. Their life was a busy one, and would have sufficed to provide for all their wants; but, faithful to their vocation, they preferred to depend entirely on Providence, and to give the world a great example of self-denial, which the circumstances of the times required. They occupied themselves with the mechanical arts: some were tailors, others shoemakers, others carpenters, others smiths. Full of charity for the neighbour, they used to attend the sick when called on, to take every care of them, to console them, to help them to die well, and, after death, to lay them in the grave.

These charitable religious always rose at midnight to recite the office. Then followed two hours of meditation on the Passion of

Our Lord, during all which time they knelt. After this exercise, they returned to their cells in order to rest themselves. At half-past four, they heard Mass in the parish church, where they remained for three hours, always on their knees. Having returned to their monastery, they went off to work or out to beg alms for their dinner. The afternoon was divided, like the morning, between prayer and labour. Such was the Order of the Voluntary Poor, a living miracle of charity, self-denial, and devotedness.[1]

It is charity that is the distinctive mark of Catholic works: God never permits heresy to borrow it. Hence none of the sects, no matter how great their power or wealth, have ever been able to produce one poor Daughter of St. Vincent de Paul: the principle of love is wanting to them. Not so with the Roman Church. She finds in her union with her Divine Spouse, really present on our altars, that perpetual infinite charity which she manifests in a thousand ways for the spiritual and corporal relief of her children. How admirable! the greatest misfortunes seem to have the greatest attractions for her maternal heart!

Already, thanks to her, the poor, the sick of every kind, abandoned children, old people, travellers, were surrounded with the most tender cares.[2] There remained, at the period of which we

[1] Hélyot, t. IV, p. 50.—We meet with it again in the *Little Sisters of the Poor.*

[2] We cannot think without emotion on the foundations of the middle ages. A pious Catholic would give a considerable sum to procure for the sick such *comforts* as they might desire. It was not enough for Christian charity to provide for all the wants of her sick child: to soothe its sufferings, she should gratify all its little whims!

Elsewhere we have seen the Church put a check to the shedding of blood by the Truce of God. Here, we behold her guarding the property of the labourer and the artisan against the reckless greed of usurers.

About the end of the fifteenth century, when the inhabitants of Italy were writhing under the twofold scourge of civil and foreign war, nearly every family was ruined. One class of men alone derived advantage from the public distress, namely, the Jews, who lent on pledges, and took 70 or 80 per cent. interest.

The evil increased so much that a remedy should be applied to it. The Church moved first in the matter. In the Pontifical States sprang up those pious banks or loan-offices known as *Monts-de-Piété*, all the glory of which is reflected on Fr. Barnabas di Terni. This good religious, preaching at Perosa, could not restrain his tears on beholding the enormous sums extorted from the poor by usurers. His zeal let him have no rest until he had prevailed on some charitable persons of means to found a loan-office for the relief of the needy. The affair proved a great success, and the office was called a *Monte di Pietà*.* . . "Montes Pietatis . . . ut ad ipsa tanquam ad

* The Italian is, in the singular, *Monte di Pietà*; and, in the plural, *Monti di Pietà*. The French is, in the singular, *Mont-de-Piété*; and, in the plural, *Monts-de-Piété*. It is a pity that these establishments are not better known and more widely spread. (*Tr.*)

speak, an unfortunate class, so much the more to be pitied as their evils were of their own work: I mean criminals sentenced to death. The Church looked on them as children whom it was necessary to console, and to save for eternity. Neither the horribleness of their crimes nor the loathsomeness of their dungeons could hinder her from visiting them and pressing them to her breast. Rome, the centre of truth and the furnace of Catholic charity, was the first to establish *Confraternities of Death.*

Hitherto, prisoners had been objects of Christian charity, which nothing escapes: as we have seen in the preceding lessons. But, at the period which we have reached, the Church organised,

montem confidenter refugere possint indigentes, et ea in promptu sint ad mutuandum sub pignoris cautione ipsis indigentibus et occurrendum usuris, quas pro sua indigentia usurariis, præsertim judæis, solvere cogebantur." (Ferraris, art. *Mont piet.*, t. V.)

In 1491, a number of the inhabitants of Perosa put accordingly a sum of money in common for the relief of the poor, to be given out at a low rate of interest. This charge was less a profit than a just compensation for the expenses incurred in the storing and preserving of the pledges received in return for the amount lent. There was no charge whatever when the amount was small. The good effects of this new establishment were soon felt. The labourer and the trader had recourse alike to it in their times of difficulty. The one found there the small sum that was often indispensable to him in his wants; the other, the means to pay his accounts when due.

The advantages of such an establishment seemed so great, that Pope Sixtus IV. wished to see his native city of Savona enjoying them: he established there a *Mont-de-Piété* on the model of that in Perosa. Similar ones soon rose up in the cities of Cesena, Mantua, Florence, Padua, Bologna, Naples, Milan, and lastly in the very capital of the Christian world. The Popes were eager to encourage these acts of charity, and, among the motives which they used to give for so doing in their bulls of authorisation, the chief was that of securing to the poor an easy means of relief, an almost gratuitous assistance. Later on, there were *Monts-de-Piété* established on the same plan in the industrial towns of Flanders. Religious authority always intervened to regulate the conditions of the loan.

It was decided by Sovereign Pontiffs and by the Councils of Lateran and Trent:—

1. That the loan should be advanced only for a certain time, a year or less.

2. That, as security for the sum lent, a pledge should be deposited by the borrower, so that, if he did not return at the proper time, the sale of this pledge might indemnify the establishment.

3. That, to defray the expenses incurred in the storing and preserving of the pledges, the borrower should pay something at a low rate, though it would be much better, says Pope Leo X., in his bull of authorisation for Monts-de-Piété, that nothing should be charged.

4. That no superfluous expenses should be permitted in the management of the establishment, and, above all, that the money intended for loans should not be applied to any other purpose.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were Monts-de-Piété in most of the leading States of Europe. (See the *Trois Rome*, t. II, p. 448.)

as it were, this charity, so as to render it more effectual, permanent and edifying.

From the thirteenth century, there had been formed in Rome confraternities of penitents for the purpose, as their name indicated, of expiating the crime of the guilty, and making his punishment a reparation for his fault and a wholesome lesson to society. The most celebrated of these confraternities was that of the *Black Penitents of Mercy*, founded at Rome in the year 1488. It owed its origin to some Florentines, who united to attend criminals sentenced to execution, and to help them to die well.

Hear the record of their deeds! When a wretch has been condemned to death, the authorities immediately inform the Confraternity of Mercy, who depute four of their members to visit the prisoner, and dispose him to make a general confession. They remain all night in his cell, and never leave him till he breathes his last. When the time for leading him forth to execution arrives, other Penitents come in great numbers, desiring to accompany him thereto. They range themselves in two rows, and walk in procession, preceded by their cross covered with black crape. Beside the cross are two of the members, who carry large yellow wax candles, figurative of the honourable satisfaction which the criminal makes to the God whom he has outraged, and to society, which he has scandalised. The members of the confraternity chant in mournful strains the Seven Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints. The two sentiments that they endeavour to excite in the soul of the victim of justice are those of repentance and confidence.

The supreme moment having come, the ministers of mercy redouble their prayers: they remain at the foot of the scaffold, uniting their supplications with the blood and sufferings of the culprit, until he expires. They then retire into the neighbouring church, and hasten to accompany with fervent prayers their brother's soul to the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. A few hours afterwards, they return to the place of execution, with torches in their hands, a sign of glory and immortality. They take down the body from the gibbet, lay it on a bier covered with black cloth, and carry it into their church. Here they recite the Office of the Dead, and the next day they have a solemn service for the deceased: then follows the burial.

The habit of the members of the confraternity is made of black sackcloth, with a cincture and a veil of the same colour: in their processions, they wear a large plain hat.[1] The Confraternity of

[1] Hélyot, t. VIII, p. 262. See, on the Florence Confraternity of Mercy, he *Trois Rome*, t. I.

Mercy enjoys the privilege of delivering annually a criminal sentenced to death or to imprisonment for life. The example of Rome was imitated. Catholic kingdoms and cities had their confraternities. Criminals, thus surrounded in their last moments by all kinds of aid, could die the death of the Saints.[1]

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for watching so carefully over our wants. Grant us the zeal of St. Vincent Ferrer and the compassionate charity of the Penitents.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will pray for prisoners, especially those condemned to death.*

LESSON XLVI.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (FIFTEENTH CENTURY *continued.*)

The Church afflicted: Violation of her Laws. The Church consoled: St. Francis of Paula; Order of Minims; Council of Florence; Judgment of God on the Greeks. The Church consoled for the Loss of the Greek Empire: the Moors banished out of Spain; Conversion of Samogitia; Conquests of the Gospel in Africa and the Indies. The Church attacked the *Renaissance*, or Revival of Paganism. The Church consoled: Discovery of America.

In the fifteenth century it was not heresy and schism alone that afflicted the Church: her own children caused her many bitter tears. The great virtue of Christianity, charity, had lost much of

[1] Catholic Confraternities for the relief of the miseries of man, whether living or dying, are of much more ancient date than is generally supposed. We may refer to the interesting particulars given on this matter in the last number of the *Archivio Ecclesiastico* of Florence. The oldest Confraternity known is that which was established at Constantinople, in 336, for the celebration of funerals. It consisted of 950 members, who engaged to bury the dead gratuitously. Theodosius approved of it by an edict inserted in his Code. Justinian also speaks of it. In the beginning of the fifth century, Alexandria witnessed the foundation of the association of the *Paradolani*, consisting of 500 members, who proposed to themselves to help the sick. They are mentioned in the Theodosian Code.

The fifteenth canon of the Council of Nantes, held about the year 659, proves that the churches of Gaul had a great many lay associations, known under the name of *Confraternities*, *Conferences*, or *Collects:* the last of these titles came from the offerings of the associates in bread, wine, and wax. The

its warmth in hearts. Many persons sacrilegiously considered it a mere trifle to violate the holy laws of fasting and abstinence; for schism, which had introduced a contempt of ecclesiastical authority, had led to a contempt of its laws. Our Lord cast a look of pity on His afflicted Spouse. To renew the fervour of Christians and to form a counterpoise against the iniquities of the world, there came forth from the treasury of the divine mercies a new Order, the most austere that had yet appeared, the Order of *Minims*. A man equally remarkable for the sanctity of his life and the splendour of his miracles, was its founder. Francis of Paula is the name of this great consoler of the Church in the fifteenth century.

He was born in Italy about the year 1416. His parents, without being rich, found in their industry a means of decent support. Scarcely had Francis arrived in the world when they began to inspire him with sentiments of piety. To the eyes of their faith, the child seemed a sacred deposit which the Lord had intrusted to them, and which He would one day demand again. This child of benediction entered into all the views of his pious parents, and showed an early attraction for prayer, retirement, and mortification. When he had attained his thirteenth year, his father placed him with the Franciscans.

Here he learned the first principles of human science, and, what was much better, the elements of the Science of the Saints. It was here that he laid the foundations of that austere life which he led ever afterwards. One year passed in this manner. He then made, with his father and mother, a pilgrimage to Rome and Our Lady of the Angels. After his return home, he obtained permission from his parents to retire into solitude: he was scarcely fifteen years old. At an age so tender, Francis led the life of the ancient solitaries of Thebaid: Italy had its Hilarion! The young hermit slept on a bare rock, and lived on nothing but the herbs that he used to gather in a wood near his cell, or that some charitable persons occasionally brought him.

members should pray for one another, give alms, recite the Office for the Dead, and above all labour for the reconciliation of enemies. In the latter half of the eighth century, the Confraternities took the name of *Gildoniæ*, from the word *Gilda*, which means an association wherein a tax is raised. The Capitularies of Charlemagne approve of the *Gildoniæ*, whose object is to give alms or bring help in case of fire or shipwreck; but they forbid engagements with an oath. At the Mechlin Congress last year, the Very Rev. Father O'Brien, Vicar-General of Limerick, spoke of charitable associations in Ireland, divided into *Guilds* of 50 members. The Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul may therefore be proud of their illustrious predecessors and glorious traditions. (*Correspondance de Rome.*)

Four years after his entrance into the desert, a few companions, attracted by his virtues, joined him. They built cells and a little chapel. Francis saw the number of his disciples increasing day by day. The solitude received its angelic inhabitants gladly, and the soul of the Church thrilled with hope. Such was the origin of the Order of Minims. The Saint gave his religious the name of *Minims*, that they might remember to look on themselves as the least of men.

The end of this Order was, as we have said, first, to rekindle charity, almost extinct in the hearts of men; and hence it took as its motto the divine word *Charity*.[1] This virtue should be its distinctive mark, its very soul. Not only should it unite all the religious with one another, but it should dilate their hearts and open them to all the Faithful. The end of the Order was, secondly, to expiate and arrest, by its austerities, the abuses and immortifications to which Christians abandoned themselves during Lent and on days of abstinence. The example of these holy religious was more effectual than any other lesson whatsoever.

Besides the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they made a fourth: that of keeping a Perpetual Lent. This vow included an obligation never to eat flesh-meat, nor any food derived from animals. Hence, flesh-meat, fat, fish, eggs, butter, cheese, and all kinds of milk, and even all things composed therefrom, were absolutely forbidden. Cases of serious illness were excepted.

To this first austerity, the Saint joined fasting throughout most of the year. As he was engaged in establishing the fourth vow of which we have spoken, the Sovereign Pontiff, Paul II., wished to have some new sureties from Francis, of whom rumour gave forth such marvellous things. With this view he sent a Prelate to him from his court. The Prelate directed his course towards Calabria, where the man of God dwelt. As soon as he saw Francis, he wanted to kiss his hands; but the Saint, with much humility, prevented him from doing so. "It is I," he said to the Prelate, whom he had never seen before, "that ought to fulfil this duty towards you; for you have been honoured with the priesthood now thirty-three years."

The Prelate, surprised beyond measure, told him that he had come, on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff, to inform himself of his life and that of his disciples. He then taxed him with his indiscreet rigour and dangerous singularity. The Saint listened calmly; but, as there was question of the establishment of that quadragesimal life in regard to which he had received commands from Heaven,

[1] The arms of the Order are the word *Charity*, in gold, and surrounded with golden rays, on an azure ground.

he took up some live coals in his hands, and, holding them without being burned, said to the Prelate, "Since you see what I am doing by the help of God, do not doubt that one can, assisted by grace, endure the most austere life and the greatest rigours of penance."

The Prelate, amazed at the prodigy, would have fallen at his feet to apologise to him and to ask his blessing; but the Saint would not let him. He asked, on the contrary, *his* blessing with so much humility that the envoy returned to Rome full of admiration for the man of God. The report which he made to the Pope and to the whole court of Rome prepared the way for the favours which the Holy See afterwards granted to the Order of Minims.

The Lord was pleased to manifest by splendid miracles the sanctity of His servant. Obliged to make various journeys for the establishment of his Order, Francis had once to visit Sicily. He comes to the shore with two of his companions, and begs the captain of a ship to be kind enough to take them on board. The captain, seeing their poverty, refuses. Then the Saint, full of confidence in that God who commands the elements, that God who opened the depths of the Red Sea before the Israelites and made St. Peter walk on the waters, spreads out his cloak on the waves, and seats himself thereon with his two companions. All three arrive safe in Sicily, to the shame and astonishment of the avaricious captain. The Saint was received like an Angel come down from Heaven. Everyone hurried to see the new Thaumaturgus.

The fame of his miracles passed beyond the boundaries of Italy, and reached the ears of Louis XI., King of France. This prince, who had a great fear of death, hoped that the servant of God might, by his prayers, delay its approach. He wrote to the Pope, begging him to make the Saint pay a visit to France. Sixtus IV. sent Francis two briefs, ordering him to go there. Nothing more was needed to make him decide. In spite of his great repugnance, and the extreme violence that he should do to his modesty, Francis regarded the voice of the Holy Father as a command from Heaven. He was received at Naples with the same pomp as an apostolic legate or the king himself. All the court waited on him, and the crowd was so great that, had it not been for the Prince of Taranto, the king's son, it would have been impossible for him to pass.

At Rome the Holy Father did him honours not accorded even to princes. The Cardinals visited him in state, and in three audiences which he had with the Pope he was seated on a chair as grand as that of His Holiness. The Sovereign Pontiff wished to raise him to ecclesiastical dignities, but the Saint declined them with much humility, and, of all the powers offered to him, would accept none but that of blessing candles and beads, so that he might be able to make presents in France. This permission was the

source of innumerable miracles, which he wrought in the Most Christian Kingdom.

Louis XI., having learned that the Saint was drawing near Touraine, went out to meet him with all his court, and fell on his knees, beseeching him to prolong his life. Francis answered as a Saint should answer on such an occasion. "God alone," he said to the king, "is the Master of health: the lives of monarchs, as well as those of other men, are in His hands. It is to Him that one must have recourse, and then submit blindly to His will." The king lodged the Saint in his palace, often took counsel with him, and begged to be prepared by him for death. Francis made this last duty his chief affair. By his prayers he obtained a change of heart for the king, who died in his arms on the 4th of August, 1483, with perfect submission to the will of God, and after recommending to him his three children and the repose of his soul.

Francis founded a monastery near the palace. It was here that God made known to him that He should soon call him out of this world, to give him an everlasting reward. In effect, he took a fever on Palm Sunday, 1507. Continuing to the end his penitent life, he would receive no care or comfort. On Holy Thursday, he had himself brought to the church, where, after confessing, he received the Blessed Eucharist, as his religious used to receive it on that day, namely, barefooted and with a rope round his neck. When he had returned to his cell, one of the brothers asked him if he would like his feet to be washed in the afternoon, according to the custom of the Church. He answered no, but that the next day they might do with his body whatever they chose. In point of fact, he died the next day, which was Good Friday, the 2nd of April.

The Order of St. Francis of Paula spread rapidly through all parts of Europe. It passed even to the Indies, and everywhere brought forth great fruits of salvation.[1]

Happy in seeing fervour renewed among her children, the Church neglected no means to bring back the Greeks of the East to unity. We have said that Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, deposited in the minds of the Greeks the seeds of schism, and Michael Cerularius, another patriarch of the same city, fomented them. This sad leaven was gradually corrupting the whole mass: defections, more or less considerable, had taken place at intervals. Meanwhile the Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all others, continually uttered words of peace to her daughter of Constantinople, and seized on every occasion of dispelling the prejudices that separated her from the Latins. The Greeks, on their side, seemed to desire a reunion. Hence so many Councils, especially

[1] Hélyot, t. VII, p. 442; Godes., April 2.

those of Lateran, Lyons, Vienne, and Constance, wherein the two Churches of East and West embraced, and signed the same profession of faith. But the fickle character and crafty spirit of the Greeks always found pretexts for destroying unity. At length, in the fifteenth century, a new attempt to restore unity was made at Florence.

A General Council, the sixteenth œcumenical one, assembled here in 1439. A decree of union, more explicit and solemn than the former ones, was drawn up and signed by the Sovereign Pontiff, the Cardinals, and the Patriarchs, and the Bishops of the East: it was thought that peace was secured. But the Greeks had scarcely returned to their own country when they began to raise new difficulties. Those who had signed the union were ill received. There was a general conspiracy of the clergy and people against them. These persecutions made a great many of them relent. If some remained steadfast in the truth, others set themselves to declaim by voice and pen against the union that they had signed, and drew to their party most of the Greeks.

It was here that God stood waiting for this guilty people. During five hundred years, that is to say, from Photius to the Council of Florence, the Greeks had been tiring out the patience of Heaven by their insubordination towards the Mother of all the Churches. There were calumnies, wrongs, rebellions continually springing up, reunions signed in the evening and broken next morning: in a word, there was no more sincerity of heart or desire of peace in their religious than in their political conduct.

God pronounced against their empire that sentence of death which He had pronounced before and which He still pronounces against so many other empires. "I created you and placed you in the world to serve Jesus Christ, My Son, to whom I have given all nations as an inheritance. Your happiness depended thereon. But, since you have refused to recognise Him, and have said to Him like the Jews, *We will not have Thee reign over us*, you are about to become, in the sight of all future ages, a monument of His justice. You would not serve Him in joy and abundance: you shall serve His enemies and yours. But you shall serve them in hunger, thirst, and nakedness. You have cast off a light yoke, which would have reflected honour on you: you shall bear an iron yoke, which will crush you. A nation, coming from the ends of the earth, will fly to you with the impetuosity of an eagle in pursuit of its prey: a cruel, barbarous nation—unacquainted with pity or humanity—whose very language you shall not understand." We are going to behold the literal accomplishment of these terrible threats[1]

[1] *Deut.* xxviii

The Lord, says Isaias, gave a whistle to call Assur against His people.[1] And lo! a conquering savage, Mahomet II., advances with hasty steps at the head of an army of three hundred thousand Turks. The minister of the divine vengeance, he lays siege to Constantinople, as formerly did Nebuchodonosor and Titus to Jerusalem. In the beginning of April, 1453, the whole country round was covered with soldiers, who pressed the city by land, while a fleet of three hundred galleys and two hundred ships watched it by sea.

But these vessels cannot enter the harbour, closed as it is with strong iron chains and well defended. Mahomet covers five or six miles of road with fir planks, thickly coated with tallow and grease, and so placed as to keep erect a vessel laid thereon. Over these, by the help of men and machines, he draws eighty of his galleys. All this great labour is got through in a few days. At the sight of a fleet descending by land into their harbour, the besieged are stupefied. A bridge of boats is constructed before their eyes, and serves for the establishment of a battery. The Greeks do not cease to defend themselves; but, their emperor having been slain in an attack, all their courage forsakes them.

The city is taken. The soldiers, furious, plunder, massacre, abandon themselves to unheard-of excesses. Forty thousand persons are slaughtered, sixty thousand are made slaves, and the number dispersed is so great that the Sultan is obliged to bring a host from the various provinces of his empire to repeople the unfortunate Constantinople. Sancta Sophia, the largest church in the East, is changed into a mosque, and on its ancient turrets the crescent takes the place of the cross. The standard of barbarism and despotism, substituted for that of civilisation and liberty, announces the future of the guilty conquered.[2]

As a matter of fact, Greece has since become the classic land of slavery and ignorance. And now, ye kings and peoples! understand: see what it costs the nations for daring to say to the Lamb that rules the world, *We will not have Thee reign over us!* Understand also and see what Mahometanism brings to the peoples that submit to its sceptre: the chains of slavery and the darkness of ignorance; while Christianity establishes liberty, and makes the light of science and art shine on the barbarous countries that receive its amiable law. Do you still reproach the Papacy with the efforts that it made during so many ages, and with the sacrifices that it imposed on itself, in order to save you from the invasions of Islamism?

[1] *Isa.*, v, 26.

[2] See our *Traité du Saint-Esprit*, t. II, *ad fin.*

Mahomet, now Master of Constantinople, continued his avenging mission throughout all the provinces guilty of schism. Corinth, Trebizonde, Theodosia, Greece, and Peloponnesus fell under his yoke. Intoxicated with success, the barbarous conqueror wished to try his strength with the islands and peoples that God was guarding. He was beaten. The celebrated Hunniades made him raise the siege of Belgrade. Scanderbeg, King of Albania, and above all the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes, Peter D'Aubusson, gave him some severe checks.

Meanwhile the Church was in a state of continual alarm; for the Mahometan Attila had wickedly vowed to exterminate all the worshippers of Christ, and had already overthrown two empires, conquered twelve kingdoms, and taken more than two hundred towns of the Christians. But God did not forget His Spouse. A sudden colic rid the world of the terrible Mahomet in a moment. A magnanimous prince then appeared in the West, raised up by the Almighty to weaken the Ottoman power, and to take from it on one side what it had gained on the other.

Ferdinand the Catholic is the providential hero who must now be made known to you. King of Aragon by his birth, master of Castile by his wife Isabella, he acquired the kingdom of Granada by his arms. It was in November, 1492, that Ferdinand, at the head of forty thousand men, entered the city of Granada, the capital of a powerful state, held by the Moors for some five hundred years. This victory broke for ever the sceptre of the Mahometans in Spain. After making them tributary to their crown, Ferdinand and Isabella occupied themselves earnestly in trying to bring them under the yoke of the Gospel. They were ably seconded herein by the celebrated Cardinal Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo.[1] Thousands of Moors received Baptism, and indemnified the Church for the losses that she had sustained by the schism of the Greeks.

While these consoling events were happening in the South of Europe, the North was also rejoicing the Church's maternal heart. The illustrious Jagellon, King of Poland, brought to the Faith an immense province previously inhabited by idolators: the Samogitians were converted. This was a new indemnification for Religion, and a new proof that the sun of the Gospel is like the sun which enlightens nature: it is never stopped or extinguished; it leaves one country only to pass to another.

To indemnify the Church, one province was not enough: a world was needed. The half of Europe was on the point of losing the Faith, and the other half would gradually become little more

[1] *Vie du cardinal Ximenès*, by Fléchier, p. 103.

than half-Catholic. What was this trial, the most terrible that the Church had to undergo from her birth? It was the *Renaissance*, that is to say, *the Revival of Paganism in the midst of Christian Nations*.

Some of the Greeks who came to the Council of Florence had remained in Europe. Others, banished from Constantinople after its capture, landed in Italy. "At this period," says an historian suspected by none, "Europe had rhetoric, logic, philosophy, theology, in a word, all the science of the world . . . She presented a system which is no longer offered in our days: everywhere the same faith; for all the same pontiff, and this pontiff the father of all the faithful . . . The situation of all was morally and politically the same: in all hearts the same desires . . .

"Religion guided morals and politics. Christianity had founded or civilised all empires. The Clergy had created or regulated all studies. All doctrines and nearly all institutions were the work of Religion, and this work was at once its kingdom and its glory. Europe was so well governed by Religion that above the codes ran the decrees of the canon law, which regulated the affairs both of the family and the state.

"This order of things presented not only a highly religious and moral character, but also the lines of relationship clearly drawn. It rested on a sacred foundation, on divine laws, consequently on eternal laws. Such was Europe, such were its institutions and doctrines, taken generally before 1453.

"Now, *all this order of things, all these doctrines and institutions, the Byzantian refugees came to overturn from their foundations*. They came to tear the treaty made between Religion and Philosophy; to separate politics from morals; to effect a twofold emancipation, by substituting *discussion for authority and progress for immutability* . . . The appearance of the Greeks with all their belongings was like *a resurrection of Ancient Greece, of Old Athens and its 'illustrious' schools.*"[1]

In point of fact, there appeared all the pagan philosophies, pagan literature, pagan poetry, pagan art, pagan theatres, pagan politics. The way for this deplorable change had been prepared The great schism of the West, the heresies of Wickliffe and Huss, and a corruption of morals, had left in souls the strong elements of rebellion. "The genius of Ancient Greece, breathing on the genius of the times, was like lightning meeting lightning."[2] A multitude of "Catholic" writers in Germany and particularly in Italy set

[1] *Hist. des doctr. morales et politiq. des trois derniers siècles*, par M. Matter, inspect. gén. des études, correspondant de l'Institut. Paris, 1836; 3 vols., in-8, t. I, p. 34-41-43-47, &c.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

themselves to blacken the philosophy, the theology, the literature, and the Christian past of Europe, and to profess unbounded admiration for everything connected with pagan antiquity. Such was their influence that the public mind was completely turned out of its course, and society was reconstructed, as much as possible, after the model of the Greeks and Romans.

What was most deplorable was that pagan authors became the masters of youth. They were praised to the skies: in every tongue, in every clime, they were the subjects of admiration. The intellectual classes, who shape the people to their own image, were brought into continual contact with the men, ideas, and things of paganism, during the most important years of life. Then that happened which must happen. Little by little an anti-national and anti-christian transformation took place in minds, until such times as it could show itself in deeds.

The old prince of this world, whose reign was represented as the most brilliant in the records of humanity, resumed his sway. Pagan rationalism, pagan despotism, and pagan sensualism openly made ready to banish faith, the spirit of sacrifice, and the freedom with which the Gospel had endowed the world. Despite the continual warnings of the greatest men in all countries, who told society that it was on the high road to a precipice, on society would rush. With full hands, it scattered far and near the tares of paganism. The world thus prepared, Protestantism and all other modern errors are explained, as the effect is explained by its cause. Let the Church receive consolation from distant lands: for a long time she shall have little more to do in Europe than to weep!

In those days, Missionaries made their way to Congo and into the heart of Africa, where they were rewarded with numerous conversions. The Canary Islands were discovered, and the East Indies, opened up by sea, received the Gospel. A new world soon comes forth miraculously in the midst of the waves. It shall be given as an inheritance to the Church. There she shall first raise her light tent: afterwards, she shall build her temples and establish her empire. Millions of new men shall have the glory of becoming her children, and she shall always be the Great Church, the Catholic Church.

The discovery of America was a compensation for the immense losses that Christianity was about to meet with in Europe. Never was there a fact more evidently Providential. To the least clear-sighted, it reveals that God whose counsels turn all the combinations of policy, the inventions of science, the enterprises of genius, the projects and passions of mankind, the winds and the waves, in a word, heaven and earth, to the welfare of His Church

and the glory of Our Lord: this is the reason why we must give a short account of it.

In the neighbourhood of Genoa, there was born, in 1449, of lowly parents, a child named Christopher Columbus. Persuaded from his early years that God had created him to discover a new world, he applied himself earnestly to the study of astronomy, mathematics, and navigation. Full of confidence, he went to Portugal, and asked, but in vain, for the means of accomplishing his design. He then passed into Spain, and besought Ferdinand to place a few vessels at his disposal: he was treated as a maniac. Columbus would not be cast down. After many refusals and much contempt, this great man obtained an audience from the king. Ferdinand received him in the midst of all his court. With that inspired tone and air which genius sometimes displays, Columbus explained his project, and declared so positively that he should discover a new world that he required beforehand the viceroyalty of it for himself and his descendants. He begged at the same time the vessels and money necessary for his expedition. All his proposals were greeted with shouts of laughter.

However, encouraged and supported by his benefactor and friend, Friar Juan Perez de Marchena, a Franciscan religious, and Prior of the convent of Rabida, in Andalusia, Columbus was of good heart. His friend wrote to Queen Isabella, to whom he had been confessor. On this recommendation, the princess, who moreover thought that she noticed something supernatural in Columbus, obtained for him what he desired. Thus, the only man in Spain that, from the beginning, understood the illustrious Genoese, the man that contributed most effectually to the discovery of the new world, was one of those poor monks whose pretended ignorance affords matter for the refined sport of our *illustrious Voltairian School!*[1]

Three vessels were intrusted to Columbus. The moment of departure had something solemn in it. All the inhabitants of the town of Palos were on the shore. The sight of their compatriots, whom the commands of the court condemned to a dangerous voyage in unknown seas, in order to search for a new world on the word of a stranger, filled their souls with grief and dread Friends shake hands and part in floods of tears. Wives look on their husbands, mothers on their sons, as so many victims sacrificed to the dreams of an ambitious man: the air resounds with their lamentations. The sailors themselves, overcome with fear or tenderness, make answer in tears to these sad farewells.

[1] *Vie de Colomb*, par Roselly de Lorgues.

In the midst of this heartrending scene rises the calm and beautiful figure of Columbus. Full of confidence in God, he imposes silence on all, and, with a strong, touching, and solemn voice, places himself and his vessels under the safe-keeping of Providence. He hears Mass with his suite, and communicates in presence of all. These religious duties over, he advances with firm step, a gracious serenity beaming on his countenance, and mounts the admiral's ship, the *Santa Maria*. The signal of departure is given, and, on Friday, the 3rd of August, 1492, the little fleet weighs anchor with a fair breeze, and, after sailing on for nine weeks, it discovers one of the islands of America!

Columbus went ashore there on Friday, the 12th of October. Scarcely had he touched the land so longed for, when he fell on his knees, and thanked the Lord for the success of his enterprise: all his followers imitated his example. As fervent a Christian as he was a faithful subject, the glorious navigator took possession of the sland in the name of God and of the King of Spain, and called it *San Salvador*, that is to say, *Holy Saviour*. The inhabitants were savages, and fled away on beholding the Spaniards; but they gradually regained courage. Little things made of glass and other such trifles were offered to them, in exchange for which they gave gold.[1] Columbus returned to Spain, and was received with the greatest honours. He made a second, and then a third voyage. At last, calumniated and disgraced, this man, who had given a world to the King of Spain, died in poverty. He had not even the consolation of leaving his name to the new land. It took that of *America*, from Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine navigator, who soon followed in the course marked out by Columbus. Rely therefore on the gratitude of men!

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for the Providential miracles by which Thou hast preserved and consoled Thy Church. Make my heart feel how grateful it ought to be to Thee!

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never act to please men, but God.*

[1] It was with this first gold received from America, and offered by the Kings of Spain in homage to the Blessed Virgin, that the ceiling of the Church of St. Mary Major, Rome, was gilt.

LESSON XLVII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SIXTEENTH CENTURY.)

The Church violently attacked: Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Henry VIII. Protestantism considered in its Authors, its Causes, its Dogmas, its Morals, its Worship, and its Effects. Protestantism is not a Religion.

You are going to witness the greatest attack ever made on the Church. The egg of paganism, laid by the Renaissance, will soon be hatched.[1] It will break out in heresies, schisms, revolutions, calamities, a whole army of fierce combatants against the Church; and the battle will rage for a long time, perhaps for all time. From the sixteenth century, hell seems to turn out all its forces. Four giant-like sectaries appear one after another, bearing aloft the standard of revolt. It is no longer one dogma, one sacrament, one particular practice of religion, that they attack: it is the very authority of the Church, the basis of all truths. Their war-cry is taken from the diabolical words that destroyed the human race: *Break the yoke of authority, and you shall be as gods!* And the ungrateful peoples think themselves strong enough, intelligent enough, to manage all their own affairs, and they range themselves in crowds under the banners of rebellion, and they attack with wild ferocity that old Church to which they are indebted for their education, their liberty, their manners, their laws, their civilisation, their superiority, their very existence!

Abuses, more or less grave, and which the Church was the first to deplore and to combat, served as a pretext for their defection: the true cause was to be found elsewhere. Europe had drunk of the cup of paganism, which is essentially pride and pleasure. Man became impatient of the yoke of authority, and he rebelled. Such was the beginning of *Protestantism:* this name tells it plainly enough. Christianity, at its birth, had to encounter the rebellion of material force, personified by the Roman Emperors; six centuries afterwards, the rebellion of the senses, personified by Mahomet; a thousand years later on, the rebellion of pride, personified by Luther. Thus ambition, pleasure, and pride showed themselves at different periods the great enemies of Christianity: such shall they ever be.

Let us now make known the champions of these three concu-

[1] Ego peperi ovum, Lutherus exclusit: this is what Erasmus, one of the apostles of the Renaissance, used to say.

piscences, that is to say, of Protestantism. They are worthy of the cause that they defend.'

1. *Luther.* Martin Luther was born on the 10th of November, 1483, at Eisleben, County of Mansfeld, Saxony. When of age, he was nourished by the pagan authors whom the Renaissance was beginning to popularise in Germany. "His soul, athirst for knowledge," says Melancthon, "seeks out the richest and purest sources. He reads most of the old Latin authors: Cicero, Virgil, Livy, and others besides. He reads them, not as a child, for the sake of words, but *to acquire knowledge and to study the pattern of human life.* Going down deeper than others, he penetrates the meaning of their lessons and their maxims."[2]

He fed himself with them exclusively—to such a degree that he himself wrote thus: "At twenty years of age, I had not yet read a line of the Scriptures."[3] Not knowing a word of the holy books, of Christian authors, or of Christian literature, he conceived a profound contempt for scholastic theology and philosophy, the matter and form of which bore so little resemblance to anything in the works of his choice. He was still young when a thunderbolt struck dead one of his companions, as the two were taking a walk. He was so terrified by this occurrence, that he joined the Order of the Augustinians at Erfurth. Such was his enthusiasm about pagan antiquity, that he brought nothing with him to the convent but a *Plautus* and a *Virgil.*

The silence of retirement, the religious profession, and even the reading of the Bible and the Fathers made no change in Luther's early tastes. The pagan that he had come forth from the university, he remained all his life. So true are the words of Scripture, *Adolescens juxta viam suam,* &c! "Having become a professor of philosophy at Wittemberg," writes the Protestant Brucker, "all his efforts tended, not only to blacken scholastic philosophy, but to banish it from the schools. This hatred had, no doubt, the same principle with him as with the learned men of Italy. *Intoxicated with the love of fine literature,* they could not endure the yoke of scholastic philosophy. Hence Luther, *brought up from his youth among the ancients,* was horrified at the barbarism of the schools."[4]

[1] Machiavelli did no less injury to the Church in the social order, than the Reformers in the ecclesiastical. A pupil of the Renaissance as well as they, he endeavoured to re-establish in Europe the principles of pagan polity. He formed a school, and his detestable works have become the manuals of a great many governments. They lead the Church to oppression, kings to despotism, peoples to slavery, and society to never-ending revolutions. (Voir dans la *Révolution,* 12 vol. in-8o, notre *Histoire du Césarisme* et du *Protestantisme.*)

[2] *Vit. Luth.,* Op. Luth., t. II, præf. [3] Tisch-Reden. p. 352.

[4] *Hist. phil.,* period. III, pars I, lib. III, c. i, p. 97.

Melancthon adds: "This hatred became daily more and more intense, on account of the sight presented to the eyes of Luther by German youth, whom the writings of Erasmus had filled with admiration for the beauties of antiquity and with contempt for scholastic barbarism."[1] Luther himself, opening his whole mind, speaks thus in a letter to Judocus: "In short, I believe it quite impossible to reform the Church, except by completely sweeping away the canon law, the decretals, scholastic theology, logic, and philosophy, such as they are, and building them all up again."[2]

We see that it is no longer the form merely that shocks: it is the substance. It is no longer the pretended rudeness of language that gives offence: it is the principle of authority. Europe and Luther had arrived at this stage, when the affair of Indulgences came on. Pope Leo X. had announced an indulgence in favour of those who should contribute to the completion of St. Peter's Church in Rome. Whether, as is pretended, through jealousy on seeing the mission of preaching the indulgence intrusted to the Dominicans and not to the Augustinians, or, what is much more probable, through a desire of profiting of a solemn occasion to begin a regular campaign against the Church, Luther went off, on the eve of All-Saints, 1517, and fastened to the door of the castle of Wittemberg ninety-five propositions against indulgences.

At this important moment, what was passing in his soul? Two Protestant historians, Brucker and Seckendorf, will tell us. "Filled with thoughts of a beautiful antiquity, Luther was convinced that scholastic philosophy and theology were the sources of all the errors that he saw multiplying in the Church. He saw the Roman Church fix on this basis her power and her ambition: an intolerable yoke laid on consciences, a yoke that all good people earnestly desired to throw off. He saw the slaves of the Roman court fighting in favour of those pestilential errors which had deluged the Church, as if it were for their altars and their homes. Since superstition, already shaken and near its ruin, as well as the barbarism of manners and doctrines, rested on scholastic philosophy and theology, he concluded that it was above all things necessary to tear off the armour of the kingdom of darkness. However, at the sight of the danger that threatened him, he hesitated. . . . *But he cast his eyes on the great men of Italy who had led the way for*

[1] *Apud* Brucker, *ubi supra.*

[2] Ut me etiam resolvam, ego simpliciter credo quod impossibile sit Ecclesiam reformari, nisi funditus canones, decretales, scolastica theologia philosophia, logica, ut nunc habentur, eradicentur et alia instituantur. (*Ap.* Brucker, *id.*, p. 95.)

him, by attacking scholastic barbarism and philosophy. Their example strengthened his great soul, and he began the attack."[1]

We know what this attack was, and what was its success. Among the classical scholars of Germany, passionate admirers of heathen antiquity, and soon among the people, the Reformation spread as fire spreads among dry briers. "*Much of this glory,*" says Brucker, "*is reflected on literary Catholics:* among others, Erasmus, Reuchlin, Vives, Lefevre, and Nizolius. They durst not, it is true, attack Rome in front, but they contributed greatly to the success of the battle by propagating an admirable philosophy, and by holding up to contempt that of past ages, as well as by exciting others to banish all such spectres from the republic of letters. A hand was looked for bold enough to put the spark to the shell: that hand was Luther's."[2]

Thus was verified in the fullest manner the saying of Erasmus: It was I that laid the egg, Luther hatched it; *Ego peperi ovum, Lutherus exclusit.* Protestantism came therefore from the *Renaissance*, as the chicken comes from the egg. Once a step was made, logic drew Luther on from denial to denial. After indulgences, he attacked the liberty of man, then confession, then the primacy of the Pope, then monastic vows. The Sovereign Pontiff condemned his errors in a bull of the year 1520. As an answer to this bull, the apostate monk burned it publicly in Wittemberg.

It was now that he published his book *On the Captivity of Babylon.* After declaring that he repents of having been so moderate, he expiates his fault by all the insults that the wildest madness can suggest to a heretic. He exhorts princes to shake off the yoke of the Papacy. At one blow he strikes down four of the Sacraments. As his audacious assertions gave rise to loud complaints, Luther, in order to seem right, chose as judge the faculty of theology in Paris, whose profound learning he had always respected. The faculty condemned him with one voice. The heretical monk became furious, and burst out into the most insulting language against the slighters of his opinions.

At the same time, Henry VIII., King of England, wrote against him a work which he dedicated to Pope Leo X. This work merited for the English prince the title of "Defender of the

[1] Quod licet magnam illi invidiam minabatur . . . excitarunt tamen virum ortem animique imperterriti exempla magnorum virorum qui in Italia barbariem aggressi, scolasticæ philosophiæ indixerant. (Brucker, *ubi supra*, p. 98; Seckendorf, *Hist. Luth.*, p. 103.)

[2] It has been often called the Deformation, and with much justice. (*Tr.*)

[3] In hoc negotio arduo et difficili summique momenti, maximum virum Martinum Lutherum principem manus admovisse. (*H.*, p. 92-93.)

Faith," which his successors have preserved, and stamped on their coins: *F. D.—Fidei Defensor*. Luther, out of himself with rage, had recourse to his usual answer, insults. Behold a sample of the amenities and courtesies that flowed from his pen! "I know not," he said, "whether folly itself can be as senseless as the head of poor Henry. Oh, how delighted I should be to cover this English majesty with dirt and filth! I have a good right to do so. Come, Mr. Henry, and I will teach you."

Luther, having withdrawn himself from the influence of the Holy Ghost, fell under the power of the devil. He himself relates that the devil appeared to him. He speaks among other things of a nocturnal conference that he had with him, in which he was told by Satan that he should put down Low Masses, and he wrote against Low Masses. Meanwhile, the pretended reformer found himself too closely confined in the castle of the Elector of Saxony to remain there for a long time. He made himself known throughout Germany, and, in order to secure followers, dispensed priests, monks, and nuns from the vow of continence. This he did in a book that again and again offends modesty.

Having appealed to lewdness, Luther next appealed to avarice. He published in 1522 a work entitled *Treatise on the Common Treasury*. He invited princes to possess themselves of the revenues of all monasteries, bishoprics, abbeys, and in general of all ecclesiastical benefices. The prospect of booty made more proselytes for Luther than all his books. His party swelled rapidly with all kinds of wicked men and ambitious nobles. It spread over a great part of Germany.

The founder of the new Gospel laid aside about this period the Augustinian habit, and, the following year, 1525, married a nun, whom he had induced to leave her convent. He soon presented a still stranger spectacle to the Christian world: he publicly granted Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, permission to have two wives. The Emperor, Charles V., grieved at these scandalous excesses, convoked a diet or assembly of the German princes at Spires in 1529. The Lutherans here acquired the name of "Protestants," from having protested against the decree of the diet which commanded that the Catholic Religion should be followed.

Luther only became more unruly. Every year he published some new work against the Sovereign Pontiff, or against Catholic princes or theologians. Let us give another sample of his style! He called Rome *the refuse of Sodom, the whore of Babylon;* the Pope, *a rascal that used to spit out devils;* and the Cardinals, *wretches that ought to be exterminated.* "If I were master," he wrote, "I would make one bundle of Pope and Cardinals, and throw them

all together into the sea. This bath would cure them, I give you my word for it, I give you Jesus Christ as guarantee." As for Catholic theologians, he speaks of them in the same mild terms. His least insults are *beast*, *hog*, *epicurean*, and *atheist*.

He was as violent with his own followers as with Catholics. He threatened them that, if they continued to contradict him, he would retract all that he had taught—a threat well worthy of an apostle of falsehood. The Zuinglians, of whom we shall shortly speak, having been so unfortunate as to displease him, he said, "The devil has taken possession of them. They are a devilish, superdevilish set. Their language is a language of lies—excited at the pleasure of Satan—infused, transfused with his infernal poison." At length, in his fury, he abused himself: he said *that he was full of devils, that he was satanised, persatanised*, &c.

From the time of his apostasy, his life was spent in rabid denunciations and shameful debaucheries. There is a Bible still preserved at the end of which appears a prayer, in German verses, written by the hand of Luther. Its meaning is this: "My God! of Thy goodness provide us with clothes, hats, hoods, cloaks, fat calves, kids, oxen, sheep, heifers, and all the other means of gratifying our passions. . . To eat and drink well is the true way never to grow tired."[1] This prayer, in which indecency, impiety, luxury, and gluttony dispute for the palm, gives a just idea of the leader of the Reformation, who died, after an excess at table, on the 18th of February, 1546, aged sixty-two years.

An apostate monk, the seducer of a nun, a frequenter of taverns and lover of good cheer, an impious and obscene jester, who set the Church on fire under pretence of reforming it, and who, like Mahomet, presented as a proof of his strange mission the success of the sword, the progress of libertinism, and the excesses of discord—of rebellion and cruelty—of sacrilege and brigandage: such was Luther.[2]

2. *Zuinglius.* Ulric Zuinglius was born on the 1st of January, 1484, at Wildhaus, County of Tockenburg, Switzerland. Associated continually, like Luther, with pagan authors, he formed in their school his judgment, his taste, and his style.[3] Passionately attached to them, they led him, as they had led Luther and so many others, to a marked antipathy for Christianity. "In 1499,"

[1] Christian Juncker, *Vita Lutheri*, p. 225.

[2] See *Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion*; *Life of Luther*, by Juncker; and, on all the Reformers, our *History of Protestantism*. We find therein the clearest proofs of this saying of a Protestant: "The Reformation is the daughter of the Renaissance."

[3] *Études sur les Réformateurs*, by M. Chaffour, p. 233.

continues his biographer, "he went to Vienna for the purpose of studying philosophy, or what was then so called, at its famous university. *He was put on his guard by his strong literary education . . .* against the miserable subtleties of vain dialectics. *Like all the other great men of the sixteenth century, Zuinglius had a vigorous hatred of scholasticism!*"[1]

"As for theology," says another of his biographers, Oswald Myconius, a contemporary of Zuinglius and his friend from childhood, "he soon saw *that it would be mere loss of time to study it.* This pretended science was nothing but confusion—worldly wisdom—vain, barbarous babbling. No one could derive *any sound doctrine* from it."[2]

Having returned from Vienna, Zuinglius, only twenty-two years of age, was chosen *Curé* by the Commune of Glaris. Ordained priest before the age, he takes possession of his benefice in 1507. Instead of preparing his sermons and catechetical instructions with the Fathers of the Church and the interpreters of Scripture, the young Curé earnestly pursues his classical studies. He passes the pagan authors in review, and on each delivers an enthusiastic eulogy. From this study he learned, like Luther, independence of mind. "Among the promoters of the great movement of the Renaissance," says M. Chaffour, "Erasmus was one of those who had the most surprising and lasting influence on Zuinglius . . . Zuinglius attributes to him *a decided influence on his ideas as a reformer.*"[3] Thus, the Father of the Renaissance might say of Zuinglius what he said of Luther: *I laid the egg, Zuinglius hatched it.*

Appointed Curé of Our Lady of Hermits, in 1516, Zuinglius soon read the works of Luther, threw off the mask, and openly declared war against the Catholic Church. By virtue of that independence of mind of which he has found a type in pagan authors, he attacks indulgences, the authority of the Pope, the sacrament of Penance, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, monastic vows, the celibacy of Priests, abstinence from flesh meat, and, what crowns the scandal, devotion to the Blessed Virgin—he, the Curé of a parish renowned among all for its sanctuary of the Mother of God!

He goes still further, and becomes a positive rationalist. In his profession of faith, addressed to Francis I., he puts pell-mell into Paradise, along with the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, the heroes and demi-gods of paganism—Hercules, Theseus, Numa, and the Scipios. He then cries out, "Can anything be imagined

[1] *Etudes sur les Réformateurs*, by M. Chaffour, pp. 234-236.
[2] *Ap.* Chauffour, p. 239. [3] Works, t. I, p. 198.

more admirable, more delightful, more glorious, than such a spectacle?"[1] That it should be matter of surprise to see such people setting themselves up as reformers of the Church is very natural; but, if they are looked at more closely, there is nothing less surprising than their aberrations. The paradise of Zuinglius is the pantheon of the pagans: both the work of free thought! Christianity had demolished that paradise; Paganism, returning to the world, reconstructed and repeopled it.

These monstrous, but logical, consequences of free thought scandalised Luther. He did not spare Zuinglius. He declared concisely that he despaired of his salvation, "because, not satisfied with continuing to fight against the Sacrament (the Real Presence), he *had become a pagan*, by placing wicked pagans, and even an epicurean Scipio, even a Numa, the instrument of the devil for establishing idolatry among the Romans, in the ranks of the blessed souls. For what will Baptism, the other Sacraments, the Scripture, and Jesus Christ Himself, avail us, if the wicked, if idolators, if epicureans are holy and blessed? What else is this than to teach that everyone may be saved in his own religion or belief?"[2]

The Curé of Einsideln did not quail at the application of his principles. Profiting of the liberty that he preached to others, he married a rich widow; for marriage was the end of all of these comedies in the Reformation. His doctrine disturbed all Switzerland, previously so quiet and content: the Protestant cantons took up arms against the Catholic ones. Zuinglius was obliged to lead his followers to the conflict. In spite of his prediction, they lost the battle of Cappel, and he himself was left among the dead: this occurred on the 11th of October, 1531.[3]

3. *Calvin.* John Cauvin, or Calvin, was born at Noyon on the 10th of July, 1509. This new apostle of reform was, like his predecessors Luther and Zuinglius, brought up in the school of pagan authors. The acorn, in whatever clime sown, produces the oak. Taught by the Renaissance, free thought produced Luther in Germany, Zuinglius in Switzerland, and Calvin in France. "The modern history of the human mind," writes the Protestant Gottlieb Buhle, "*begins with the study of classical literature.* The striking contrast between the exquisite taste that guided the ancient artists, poets, historians, and orators, *with the freedom of thought that guided the philosophers*, and the marks of barbarism that the hierarchy (the Church) and scholasticism left on all the productions of the ages in

[1] Op. t. II, p. 559. Tiguri, ed. in fo., 1581.
[2] Parv. confess. Luth., Hospinian. p. 187.
[3] *Hist. de la Réforme dans la Suisse occid.*, par M. de Haller.

which they prevailed, made men feel a deep shame at the oppression under which they had previously groaned . . . Hence arose events whose *necessary result should be the spread of intelligence and free thought.*[1]

Cauvin is a new proof of this. Having come to Paris in order to continue his studies, he follows the course of the University, which, notwithstanding the complaints of the Sorbonne, begins to be peopled with "humanists." Such is the enthusiasm of young Cauvin for pagan antiquity, that he changes his name and signs his first literary essay *Lucius Calvinus, civis romanus.*[2] From Paris he goes to Bourges, and receives lessons from Alciat. This civilian, passionately fond of antiquity, understands nothing, admires nothing, teaches nothing, but the Roman law. "From the convent, Calvin goes forth with only one god, Aristotle; from the forms of the University of Bourges, he goes forth with the thousand whom Alciat has given him to adore. These were all those founders of the Roman law whom the Milanese, in his lyric enthusiasm, used to compare with Romulus."[3]

While Alciat was giving young Calvin a passion for the Romans, another professor, Melchior Wolmar, was giving him a passion for the Greeks, and fully developed in him those germs of free thought which were already so strong. Such was Calvin when he came forth from the University of Bourges in 1522. He was soon provided, as a help to live, with a simple benefice; but he was never a priest. His disorderly behaviour caused him to be branded on the shoulder with a hot iron. He left his place, and took refuge in Paris, where he began to dogmatise secretly. . . But the report of his preaching reached the ears of the authorities, and Calvin, disguised as a vine-dresser, was only too glad to escape the police and to get out of Paris.

Having retired to Nerac, he wrote his *Christian Institution,* and then, having gone to Basle, published it. Like Luther and Zuinglius, he put to the sword the doctrine, the morals, and the worship of the Church in which he had been born. He would have no external worship, no invocation of Saints, no visible head of the Church, no Bishops, no Priests, no festivals, no cross, none of those sacred ceremonies which Religion recognises as so useful in the service of God, and true philosophy declares so necessary for gross and material men, who can hardly rise in any other way than by the senses to the contemplation of spiritual things.

While preaching a religion disengaged from sensible things, he

[1] Hist. de la phil. moder., *Introd.*, pp. 2-4.
[2] Papyr. Masson, *Vit. Calv.* [3] Audin, *Vie de Calv.*, p. 39.

himself is the slave of his senses. After the example of the other pretended reformers, he adores himself in his own flesh. Luther, a priest, marries; Zuingluis, a priest, marries; Calvin, an ecclesiastic, marries; Farel, a priest, marries; Œcolampadius, a priest, marries; Carlostadt, a priest, marries; Bucer, a priest, marries; Ochin, a priest, marries; Cranmer, an archbishop, marries: so of the rest! Such as the masters, such the disciples. "Out of ten *evangelists*," says Calvin himself, "you will scarcely find one that became *evangelical* for any other purpose than to be able to give himself *more freely to intemperance and debauchery*. . . There is a still more deplorable wound: the pastors, yes, the pastors themselves, who ascend the pulpit, are nowadays *the most shameful examples of perversity and other vices*. . . I am surprised at the patience of the people, I am surprised that women and children do not cover them with dirt and filth."[1] It is still the same in our own days. No Catholic becomes a Protestant to have more religion, but to have less, or to have none at all; that is, as Calvin said, to give himself more freely to his passions.

After various tours through Switzerland, the reformer settled down in Geneva. He who used to proclaim freedom of thought and avail himself so largely thereof, he who would have no pope in the Church, became not only the pope but the despot of Geneva. The least objection to his ideas, the least opposition to his wishes, was a work of Satan, a crime deserving of death. Gibbets were raised in several parts of Geneva, surmounted with this notice: *For anyone who speaks ill of M. Calvin.*[2] "The laws of Calvin," says one of his Protestant admirers, M. Paul Henry, "are written not only with blood, but with fire. They might be regarded as ordinances stolen from a Decius or a Valens. . . The Calvinistic Code contains all that we find in *pagan legislation*—anathemas, rods, melted lead, pincers, ropes for hanging up by the arm-pits, gibbets, a sword, a funeral pile, a sulphur crown."[3]

Hence, being contradicted by Michael Servetus, a young Spanish physician, he caused him to be burned alive. He exhorted his disciples to treat in like manner all such as checked the progress of his doctrine. Writing one day to Du Poet, whom he styles *General of Religion in Dauphiné*, he says, "Think it no fault to rid the country of those rascally zealots who exhort the people to have nothing to do with us, who blacken our character, who want to make our faith pass for a dream. Such monsters ought to be

[1] Comm. sur la iie. ép. de saint Pierre, c. ii, v. 2; *Liv. sur les Scandales*, p. 128.

[2] Picot, *Hist. de Genève*, t. I, p. 266.

[3] Apud Audin, *Vie de Calv.*, t. I, p. 15.

destroyed, as I have done here by the execution of Michael Servetus." Such was the charity of this *evangelical* man!

Let us speak of his politeness. *Hog, ass, dog, colt, bull, drunkard,* and *madman* are some of the compliments that he used to address to his adversaries. He exhorted his followers to possess themselves of all the wealth of Catholics. "And this for the love of God," he would say, "that we may be in a position to maintain our little flock; for, without plentiful means, a good will is useless."

Proud, impure, and cruel, Calvin died in despair, and of a shameful disease, which, even in the eyes of his disciples, was regarded as a visible stroke of the divine justice.[1] He came to his sad end in Geneva, on the 27th of May, 1564.

4. *Henry VIII.* The fourth reformer of religion was Henry VIII., King of England. This prince had at first written against Luther. So long as he was chaste, Henry remained a Catholic; but, wishing to indulge his passions, he begged Pope Clement VII. to annul his marriage. This marriage having been a most lawful one, the Sovereign Pontiff replied that he could not sunder what God had joined. Henry went further: he cast off his wife, and married Anne Boleyn. The Pope excommunicated him. To escape from the thunders of the Church, the shameless prince had himself declared *Protector and Supreme Head of the Church of England.* Having become a Pope, Henry made no change in doctrine; but schism led rapidly to heresy.

The new errors could not fail to be well received in a country so much disposed to rebel. During the lifetime of Henry, Lutheranism began to creep in there without his knowledge and against his will. After his death, Edward VI. totally abolished the Catholic Religion.

More concerned with the gratification of his passions than with the establishment of his church, Henry married five wives, whom he repudiated one after another or led to the scaffold. It is related that, at the point of death, he cried out to those around his bed, "My friends, all is lost—the state, fame, conscience, and Heaven!" His death occurred in the year 1547.

It will be worth while to consider carefully this Protestantism, which there are so many efforts made at the present day to extend.

1. *In the men who established it.* We find that it does not belong to man to make a religion. God alone can do so by Himself

[1] Calvinus in desperatione finiens vitam obiit, turpissimo et fœdissimo morbo, quem Deus rebellibus et maledictis comminatus est, prius excruciatus et consumptus. Quod ego verissime attestari audeo, qui funestum et tragicum illius exitum et exitium his meis oculis præsens aspexi. (Joan. Haren, *Apud Petr. Cutsemium; Vie de Calvin,* par M. Audin.

or by His messengers. The messengers of God must bring credentials to prove that they speak in His name. These credentials are miracles. Such is the *extraordinary* mission. The *ordinary* mission is that which comes from the Church established by God Himself. Now Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, and Henry VIII. had no mission, extraordinary or ordinary. Protestantism had as its authors four deserters from the Catholic Church, four barefaced profligates, four wretches with whom no decent person would associate. And it was Thou, O my God! the God of all sanctity, it was Thou that didst choose such ministers to reform the Church, to correct Thy Spouse, to teach truth and virtue! Believe it who can!

2. *In its causes.* Behold them: pride, the love of riches, and the love of sensual pleasures. "Luther and Calvin," as Frederick, King of Prussia, a Protestant and a philosopher, used to say, "were *despicable fellows.*" "We are not to suppose," adds another writer, "that the sectaries of the sixteenth century were superior geniuses. It is with the leaders of sects as with ambassadors: middling characters often succeed best, provided the conditions that they offer are advantageous. The love of ecclesiastical goods was the chief apostle of reform in Germany; the love of novelty, in France; and the love of forbidden pleasures, in England."

3. *In its dogmas.* The Creed of Protestants may be reduced to one article: *I believe whatever I like.* In point of fact, the fundamental principle of Protestantism is that every man ought to search for his religion in the Bible, and admit nothing but what he finds there—what he himself finds, and not another. Protestantism says therefore to the peoples, while presenting them with a Bible:—

"The truth, the whole truth is contained in this book. But what is the truth, what is Christianity? I do not know: it is for you to find out in the Bible. Search then, whosoever you are, men, women, and children, learned and ignorant, search!

"Now speak. Do you find in the Bible the mystery of the Trinity? Do you believe it? You are a Christian. Do you not believe it? You are a Christian. Do you believe the divinity of Jesus Christ? You are a Christian. Do you not believe it? You are a Christian. Do you believe an eternity of punishments? You are a Christian. Do you not believe it? You are a Christian. Whatever opinions you have, once you assert that you have found them in the Bible, enough, you are a Christian. Yet what you believe, others deny; what appears to you true, appears to others false. Which of you is right? Do not ask me about that matter; only remain calm in your uncertainty, and be sure that one may be a good Christian without knowing what it is necessary to believe in order to be a Christian."

Such is, word for word, the doctrine of Protestantism. Now, what happened? That there were soon, among Protestants, as many religions as individuals. One believed that he found in the Bible five sacraments; another, four; another, two; another, none at all. Affairs came to such a pass that, during the lifetime of Luther, there were already counted among his disciples thirty-four different religions, attacking one another, abusing one another, anathematising one another, and united only in their hatred of the true Church.

Since that period Protestant sects have multiplied to no end. Every day there are new ones formed. In the city of London and its environs alone more than a hundred may be counted;[1] and, in each sect, the professions of faith succeed one another like the leaves of trees. Thus, "The Protestant religion," wrote a Protestant professor lately, "has been altogether dissolved by the multitude of confessions and sects made during and since the Reformation. . . Not only has the outward appearance of our Church undergone countless subdivisions, but it is even inwardly disunited and divided in its principles and opinions."[2]

In 1835, another said, "The Reformation resembles, in its separated churches and spiritual power, a worm cut into little pieces, which all continue to move for some time, but gradually die away."[3] Another adds, "If Luther were now to come forth from the grave, it would be impossible for him to recognise as his own, or even as members of the society that he founded, those apostles who, in our Church, pass for his successors."[4]

[1] Here are the names of the principal ones—names as ridiculous as their doctrines: Anglicans, Collegians, Weepers, Indifferentists, Multipliers, Quakers, Shakers, Jumpers, Groaners, Methodists, Wesleyans, Wickfieldians, Millenarians, Adamites, Rationalists, Generationists, Southeyites, Anabaptists, Adiaphorists, Enthusiasts, Pneumaticists, Brownites, Interimites, Mennonites, Berborites, Calvinists, Evangelists, Labadists, Lutherans, Luther-Calvinists, Baptists, Luther-Baptists, Union Baptists, Sabbatarians, Puritans, Armenians, Socinians, Zuinglians, Presbyterians, Anti-Presbyterians, Luther-Zuinglians, Calvin-Zuinglians, Oziandrians, Luther Oziandrians, Ubiquists, Pietists, Bonakerians, Versechoreans, Latitudinarians, Seceders, Glassites, Sandemanians, Cameronians, Philistines, Hopkinsonians, Necessarians, Edwardians, Priestleyites, Burghers, Antiburghers, Bereans, Ambrosians, Moravians, Monasterians, Antinomians, Anomians, Munsterians, Latter Day Saints, Sanguinites, Confessionists, Unitarians, Trinitarians, Antitrinitarians, Convulsionists, Anticonvulsionists, Impeccables, Rejoicers, Taciturns, Demoniacs, Rustics, Free People, Apostolics, Spiritualists, Conformists, Nonconformists, Episcopalians, Mystics, Socialists, Puseyites. (See an English work, *Guide to Truth and Happiness*, p. 85. The total number mentioned in it is 110.) Would not this be an interesting page to add to the history of the "Variations?"

[2] Wette, *Les Protestants*, 1828.

[3] Les *Eglises chrétiennes*, 1835.

[4] Reinhard, *Discours sur l'Eglise*, 1800.

Another continues, "The disunion of the pastors causes the greatest confusion in the minds and hearts of the people. They hear, they read; but they no longer know where they are, nor what they ought to believe, nor whom they ought to follow."[1] So great is this disorder that another Protestant says in a recent work, "*I would undertake to write on the nail of my thumb all the doctrines that are still generally believed among Protestants.*"[2] Another concludes, "Between reforming and protesting, Protestantism has been reduced to a row of noughts without a single figure before them."[3] And there are people who would give us Protestantism for a religion! Rather let them say that Protestantism is a denial of all religion.

We cannot delay to notice much the endless inconsistencies of Protestants. Thus, they reject every kind of authority and tradition in matters of religion; but how do they know that the Bible is a divine book, if not by the assurance of tradition? If tradition seems to them infallible when it says that the Bible comes from God, why does it not seem so to them when it teaches all the other truths that they reject? You keep Sunday; but how, I ask, do you know that it is the Lord's Day, if not solely by the assurance of tradition? Why, then, have you suppressed festivals, and why do you not observe abstinence in Lent, on Vigils, and on several other days, according to the teaching of tradition and the ancient usage of the Church? In like manner, where have you learned, if not from tradition, that baptism by infusion is valid, as well as many other practices which you regard as sacred?

4. *In its morals.* The decalogue of Protestants is reduced to one precept: *Thou shalt practise whatever thou believest.* Now, as we have shown, the Protestant may believe whatever he likes, that is to say, whatever appears true to his mind. He may therefore do whatever he likes, all the while remaining a Protestant, and without any other Protestant's having a right to contradict him. This is what has been seen and what is still seen. Thus, Luther laid down as the foundation of his morality that good works are useless, nay, hurtful to salvation; that man is merely a machine, without moral liberty, incapable of having virtues or vices. Calvin said that man, once justified by faith, is secure of his salvation, no matter into what disorders he may afterwards plunge. Both Luther and Calvin pretended that they had found their detestable maxims set forth most clearly in the Bible.

The Anabaptists, in their turn, said, *We have found in the Bible*

[1] Ludke, a minister.
[2] Harms, a minister at Kiel.
[3] Schmaltz, a Prussian jurisconsult.

that, to fulfil the commands of Heaven, we must put the wicked to death, and confiscate their property, so as to form a new world. Accordingly, they were to be seen with a Bible in one hand and a torch or a sword in the other, burning and killing, plundering and wasting all Germany.' In the track of the Anabaptists came the Famillists, who taught, of course according to the Bible, that *it is good to persevere in sin, so that grace may abound.* Then followed the Antinomians, who said openly that *adultery and murder render one holier on earth and happier in Heaven.*

If you study the sects of Protestantism, you will find that no point of morality has escaped being denied by some of them. The reason is very simple: there is no dogma of which Protestantism can declare that it *must be believed.*

In conclusion, as the Creed of Protestants may be reduced to a single article, *I believe whatever appears to me true,* so its moral code may be reduced to a single obligation, *I must practise whatever appears to me good.* This is a formula on morals to which every man, whatever may be his passions, can easily accommodate himself, as, whatever may be his errors, he accommodates himself to the corresponding formula on faith!

5. *In its worship.* Worship is an expression of faith and morals. Now, among Protestants, there is nothing obligatory or uniform in regard to faith or morals. Therefore, there is nothing and there can be nothing obligatory or uniform among them in regard to worship. The emptiness of the Reformation, brought about by the loss of faith and love, is very clearly manifested in its churches. They are dumb, they are bare: nothing colder or gloomier than a Protestant church! Continual changes in opinion give rise to continual changes in the signs used to express opinion. Hence, among Protestants, some regard preaching as a religious act, others as a civil act; some consider baptism useless, others hold it necessary.

But here is something that in absurdity transcends all imagination. The Lutherans and Calvinists of Germany having lately united, the ministers announced that they would give the reality or the figure of the Body of Jesus Christ in communion according to the wish or the belief of each one. Hence, when the *Faithful* came to receive communion, the ministers said, Do you believe that you receive the Body of Jesus Christ? Yes, replied the Lutherans. Very well, receive the Body of Jesus Christ. Do you believe that you receive the figure of the Body of Jesus Christ? Yes, replied the Calvinists. Very well, receive the figure of it. What is this but a piece of sacrilegious trickery; a declaration

' See the Lives of Leyden and Munzer.

made by Protestantism in the face of the world that it no longer knows what to believe regarding the Eucharist, any more than the other great truths of religion: a proof that the most august act of Christian worship is nothing more in its eyes than a vain ceremony, without the least meaning?

Need we now be surprised that so many Protestants show an insurmountable repugnance towards this *heartless* worship? Yet this worship is still maintained, just like a body existing for some time after the soul has fled from it, but corruption soon sets in, and all returns to dust.[1]

6. *In its effects.* The child of the Renaissance, Protestantism is one of the great calamities that have befallen Europe during the last three hundred years:[2] the facts are at hand to prove this. Scarcely had its first apostles spread their principles among the people, when a tremendous conflagration burst out in Germany, France, Switzerland, and England. A war of thirty years; the plundering of a hundred thousand monasteries, sacred asylums of learning, monuments of the charity of our ancestors; the destruction of more than two hundred thousand churches; rivers of blood from the north to the south of Europe; unparalleled atrocities; fearful hatreds; perjuries; scandals that put vice itself to the blush: such were the immediate effects of Protestantism. And it is the truth![3] "No," said a celebrated infidel, "the truth is never hurtful."[4] That Protestantism is so, is the best proof that it is not the truth.

If then it has been truly said of Voltaire, who was only a logician of Protestantism, that "he could not see all that he did, but he did all that we see," with much more reason may it be said of Modern Paganism, and of Luther, one of its earliest sons, that "they could not see all the evil that they did, but they did all the evil that we see." *By destroying faith, they destroyed society.*

The effects of Protestantism are no less deplorable in the religious than in the social order. Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Henry VIII! you who, having given yourselves a mission, pretended to reform the Church, hear what you did!

When, rejecting Catholic authority, you proclaimed the inde-

[1] See the letter of M. de Laval, a Protestant minister, on his return to the Church.—The Protestant ministers of Paris are at present diametrically opposed to one another. Several of them, like those of Geneva, have gone so far as to deny the fundamental dogma of Christianity, the divinity of Our Lord.

[2] Grotius, a celebrated Protestant, used to say, Ubicumque invaluere Calvini discipuli, imperia turbavere.

[3] See a curious work entitled *Le Secret des finances de France*, by the Protestant Fromenteau. 1581.

[4] J. J. Rousseau.

pendence of every man in regard to matters of faith, others rose up under your very eyes to continue your work. They reformed your teaching, as you had reformed that of the Church. You had said, We reject such and such dogmas, because they shock our reason. They said, We reject such and such other dogmas, because our reason cannot admit them. You had asked, Who are you? They asked you in their turn, Who are you to contradict the Church? And you could not answer them!

Henceforth, frightened at your work, you foresaw something of its deplorable progress, but your presentiments were far from equalling the reality.

Scarcely had you sunk into your graves when new sects, awaking at the cry of revolt that you had sent forth to the world, tore in pieces the shreds of faith that you had retained, and destroyed one after another all the symbols of Religion, until at length your disciples went so far as to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ.[1] And this solemn apostasy, which would have drawn from the Reforma-

[1] We know that the Consistory of Geneva forbade the ministers to preach on the divinity of Jesus Christ. It will be interesting to record the lamentations of ministers at present in Germany, England, &c. Here are a few of them :—

"The antichristian spirit speaks loud. We have the Bible for our rule of faith; but I dare not say how it is interpreted. Our universities themselves go so far that I fear they will soon get a fall; for when the salt loses its savour, it is cast out and trodden under foot. The devil has more faith than many of our doctors, and Mahomet himself would be much better than they. It is surprising and yet true that, among the Turks, no person would dare openly to blaspheme Christ, Abraham, Moses, or the Prophets, while among us many Christians do it by voice and pen. The number of those who explain the miracles of the New Testament as natural events is legion, and their followers can no more be counted than the stars of the firmament.

"Many of our sermons, even those of superintendents and general superintendents, those of preachers of the court and first chaplains, might without the least inconvenience be preached in a Jewish synagogue or a Turkish mosque. It would only be necessary to substitute for the words 'Christianity' and 'Christ,' introduced occasionally for the sake of form, those in which the preacher has faith—the doctrines and precepts of reason, and the philosophers, as, for example, Socrates, Mendelssohn, Mahomet, &c. If a man nowadays preaches the word of God pure and unadulterated, if he preaches it with effect, confounding the incredulous, terrifying the indifferent, confirming in the faith the friends of Jesus Christ, people immediately cry out, This man is preaching *Popery!*"

See the work of Dr. V. Hœuninghaus, a convert, entitled, The Results of my Travels in the Field of Protestant Literature, or the Necessity of returning to the Catholic Church, demonstrated solely by the acknowledgments of Protestant Theologians and Philosophers.—We cannot help admiring the boldness of Dr. Hœuninghaus's undertaking. Among the authorities that he brings forward, to the number of *eighteen hundred and eighty-seven*, there is not a single Catholic!

tion a cry of indignation if it had still been Christian, was ratified by the scandal of its silence. All was then consummated by it. The work of Protestantism attained its end. There is nothing more to reform in Christianity, when at length one tries to reform God Himself. And this is the religion that an effort is made to propagate at the present day!

What do I say?—a *religion?* Protestantism is no religion. All religion supposes an authority that obliges one to believe something and to do something. Protestantism has no authority, since it gives everyone the right to draw up his own programme of faith and morals. It neither binds nor can bind to anything, not even to the Bible. Protestantism is therefore nothing but a system of independence in regard to matters of religion. Whence it follows that the Protestant who becomes a Catholic does not *change* his religion. Not having any, he cannot change it In becoming a Catholic, he receives what he had not.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having given us birth in the bosom of the True Church. Grant us the grace to console the Church by the sanctity of our lives.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will often pray for the conversion of heretics.*

LESSON XLVIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SIXTEENTH CENTURY *continued.*)

The Church defended: St. Cajetan of Tienna—Order of Regular Clerks Council of Lateran; Order of St. John of God; Jesuits—St. Ignatius—St. Francis Xavier.

In the last lesson we studied the camp of the Church's enemy, and the character of the heresiarchs whom the devil employed in the sixteenth century to destroy on earth the work of Redemption. Never were his efforts more strenuous. But it is written of the Church, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*[1] Against the armies of the enemy, God opposes two General Councils; Doctors, distinguished alike by their genius and their holiness; and fifty-nine Religious Orders or Congregations. At length, to compensate

[1] *Matt.*, xvi, 18.

the Church for her losses in Europe, he gives her America, the Indies, and Japan.

It is at the moment when Paganism, returning triumphant to Europe, corrupts philosophy, literature, art, politics, ideas, morals—at the moment when Protestantism, the offspring of Paganism, seats itself on the ruins of Catholic altars and temples, pulled down by it throughout a great part of Europe, and flatters itself with the hope of assisting at the funeral of the Roman Church—that this same Church appears most full of life, and makes a new display of extraordinary strength.

This spectacle fills a Protestant writer with amazement.

"Behold," says Leopold Ranke, "how in Italy, France, and Spain, there are fifty-nine reformations or creations of religious orders for education, for instruction and charity, tending to consecrate to the service of the Church all the forces available, and to bring future generations gradually into the same path! I pause before the great figures of this period: a Charles Borromeo, an Ignatius, a Francis Xavier, a Francis de Sales, a Teresa, a Paul Justinian, a Cajetan of Tienna, a Peter Caraffa, a Romillon, a Berulla, a Philip Neri, a Hugh Menard, an Azpilcuéta, a John of God, a Bellarmine, a Baronius, a Vincent de Paul.

"Farther off I see the magnificent edifice of the Catholic Church raised in South America, where conquests had been turned into missions, and missions had become civilising. I see in the East Indies that great centre of Catholicity at Goa, around which were to be counted, in 1565, nearly three hundred thousand Christians. I see Japan with three hundred thousand other Christians in 1579, and, in 1606, with three hundred churches and thirty houses of Jesuits founded by Father Valignano; afterwards, despite the fury of persecution, with two hundred and thirty-nine thousand three hundred and thirty-nine Japanese converts between the years 1603 and 1622.

"I see in China the first church consecrated at Nankin the year after the death of the celebrated Father Ricci, who used always to begin with lessons on mathematics so as to end with lessons on Religion, and, in 1616, Christian churches in the five provinces of the empire. Not a year passed then without thousands of persons being converted, and all this in spite of the resistance of the national religions existing throughout the East: seventy brahmins converted by Father Nobili in 1609; at the court of Mogol, three princes of the imperial family of Akbar converted, in 1595, by Jerome Xavier, a nephew of the Saint; the Nestorian community brought back to the Faith; in Abyssinia, Sela Christos, the emperor's brother, followed by a great many others; afterwards, the emperor Seltan Segueld communicating according to the Catholic rite!

"At the Roman court—which trained men to politics, government, poetry, art, and erudition—all had the same character of religious austerity. The Church touched with her breath the corrupt and extinct forces of life, and gave the world a new charm, a new colour.

"What activity! Rome, anxious to embrace the whole world, hurrying almost at the same moment to the Indies and over the Alps, sending her representatives and defenders to Tibet and to Scandinavia! And, on this wide scene, you everywhere behold her young, energetic, untiring: the impulse that comes from the centre is felt, perhaps in the liveliest manner, by labourers in distant lands!"[1]

The abundance of life which the Church poured out did not exhaust her strength. To apostate priests, the authors of the pretended reformation, she opposed priests whose learning, sanctity, and zeal brought about a true reformation in the clergy and faithful, until such times as, having become terrible legions, they should carry the war into the enemy's country, and make among barbarous nations conquests that would more fully indemnify the Church. Of this number was St. Cajetan of Tienna, founder of the "Regular Clerks." This Saint was born at Vicenza, in 1480, of the noble family of Tienna. Scarcely had he come into the world when his pious mother offered him to the Blessed Virgin. "My Divine Queen," she said, "I present to thee this fruit of my womb, that thou mayst rectify in it whatsoever it has received from me impure or imperfect. If I have given it the life of the body, do thou give it the life of the soul. Let this child be more thine than mine. I beg thee to be his tender mother: I am satisfied to be his nurse in thy name. I do not ask for riches or honours which would make him great in the eyes of the world, but that, through thy maternal protection, he may become great before God." An admirable example, which all mothers ought to imitate!

The good countess felt within her that she was heard.[2] From this moment she looked on her little child with a tender respect, as the son of the Mother of God; and, with the humility of a nurse or servant, always called him *Cajetan of St. Mary*. When one enters life under such auspices, what is not to be hoped for? Cajetan was the joy of his father and mother by his piety, his obedience, his gentleness, his modesty, and his tender love for the poor. After a brilliant course of study and taking the title of

[1] Leopold Ranke, *History of the Papacy*. Mr. Ranke is a Protestant, as his work gives more than one sad proof.

[2] Cujus vota benigne suscipere ipsa Deipara visa est. (Words of the Bull of Canonisation.)

doctor at the university of Padua, he went to Rome: he was then twenty-five years of age.

His intention was to lead a hidden life. But his virtues and talents were not slow to raise the veil under which he wished to lie concealed. Pope Julius II. desired to see him. Observing in him the marks of an eminent sanctity, he kept him at his court; and, in order to attach him thereto, appointed him protonotary—an important post. But the Lord had other views over His servant: these views were indicated by the very date of Cajetan's birth. As we have said, it took place in 1480, three years before that of Luther. To the champion of error, the Lord had opposed a defender of truth.

That such was the mission of St. Cajetan, we find authentic testimony in the decree of his canonisation. "His birth demonstrates the sovereign goodness of God, who prepares a remedy for evils, even before they appear. Thus, to check the unbridled fury of Luther, He sent to the Church a powerful auxiliary in the Order of Regular Clerks, founded by St. Cajetan at the very moment when the German monk was laying aside his habit and renouncing the practices of his state."[1] As a matter of fact, it was in the year 1524, the same in which Luther threw off his habit, that St. Cajetan founded his institute. Such a coincidence, and many others besides, made St. Cajetan be regarded, not only by Pope Innocent XII., but by the various princes of Europe and by all the historians of his life, as a providential antagonist to the apostate of Wittemberg. St. Cajetan, says the learned Boverio, a Capuchin, was the scourge of the Lutheran heresy (*Lutherani seminis profligatorem*), and the Jesuit Father, Rallestieri, declares him *born to make war on Luther*.[2]

His French historian, Mgr. Carpy, a counsellor of state, bears the same testimony of him. "Scarcely had Luther raised the standard of rebellion in Germany, when the blessed Cajetan founded his Order in Rome, chiefly with a view to combat the heresiarch by a reformation of the clergy, whose conduct was in Luther's eyes a rock of scandal. Whence it follows that the other orders of regular clerks, established after his example, were so many auxiliary forces to the grand army raised by St. Cajetan, without any other heads than Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Hence, the Tri-

[1] Quo bonitas illa summa Numinis demonstratur, maturius profligandis malis parare adjumenta, quam mala ipsa eveniunt. Si quidem ad effrœnam Lutheri insaniam compessendam opem non sane exiguam attulit hæc Clericorum Regularium a Cajetano instituta sodalitas eadem tempestate, qua ille disciplinæ et mores exuit. (*Bulla can.*)

[2] *Vita di S. Gaët.*, lib. II. c. ii. § 3, p. 98. Octavo, Rome, 1847.

bunal of the Rota delivered this beautiful panegyric in regard to him: *Zeal in defence of the Faith made him institute, for the confusion of heretics, the Order of Regular Clerks, which the all-good and all-powerful God has favoured with such happy increase, even to our own days.*[1]

This increase was not confined solely to the Order of St. Cajetan: it also and more particularly extended to Orders of the same kind, the offshoots of this fruitful tree. Sixteen years after St. Cajetan, behold St. Ignatius with his *Clerks of the Society of Jesus—religio clericorum societatis Jesu*, as the Council of Trent says; St. John of God, with his *Good Brothers;* St. Camillus of Lellis, with his *Clerks to attend the Sick;* St. Jerome Æmiliani, with his *Somasco Fathers;* St. Joseph Calasanctius, with his *Fathers of the Pious Schools;* Antony, with the Barnabites; Adorno, with his *Minor Clerks!* As it is meet to attribute to the founder of an Order the glory of the good done by the different congregations born thereof, or formed on its model and animated by its spirit, we ought to say that all the good done during the last three centuries by the different congregations of Regular Clerks is referable to St. Cajetan, justly called the father of these congregations.

A proof, still more evident if possible, of the Providential mission of this great Saint, is found in his life, which was an appropriate counterpart to Luther's, and in his works, which were the bulwark of the Faith against heresy. We have seen that pride and a spirit of rebellion in regard to the Holy See, a love of riches, and a passion for pleasure were the beginnings of Protestantism. To these diabolical evils, St. Cajetan opposed in his congregation a filial obedience towards the Holy See, chastity, absolute poverty, and the most exemplary regularity.

In the foundation of his works, he had as co-operators Boniface di Colla, Paul Consigliari, and Peter Caraffa, who became Pope under the name of Paul IV. The last-mentioned having been Bishop of Theate or Reate in the kingdom of Naples, it came to pass that the Clerks of St. Cajetan received the name of *Theatines.* These excellent religious, who are to the present day the edification of the Church, multiplied rapidly, and spread, not only in Italy and Sicily, but also in Spain, Poland, Tartary, Mingrelia, Circassia, and Georgia. Worn out with labours and sinking under the weight of his merits, St. Cajetan died at Naples on the 7th of August, 1547. St. Peter of Alcantara, who was in Spain, saw his

[1] Catholicæ fidei zelo ad hæreticorum confusionem clericorum religionem instituit, cujus incrementa Deus optimus maximus ad hæc usque tempora salutaribus auspiciis adeo prosperavit. (*Vita di S. Gaët.*)

essed soul rising to Heaven surrounded with light, and cried out, This day one of the pillars of the Church has fallen![1]

Before the birth of the heresy of Luther, the Church, always solicitous for the welfare of Christendom, had, in 1512, assembled her seventeenth General Council in the Church of St. John Lateran, Rome. To condemn the philosophy and literature of the Renaissance by declaring them poisoned in their roots—*radices philosophiæ et poæseos esse infectas;* to remove the infatuation regarding pagan antiquity, the source of monstrous errors; to confirm the ancient system of Christian studies; to restore peace among Christian princes; and to form a league against the Turks, continually threatening Religion and European civilisation: these were its chief objects. Thanks to Luther, whose heresy brought discord into Germany, the League did not succeed, and the Mahometans might at their ease lay waste the Christian provinces bordering on their empire!

While the Church was looking to the safety of her children, she also justified herself in the eyes of the world from the reproaches and calumnies with which the apostate of Wittemburg was trying to disgrace her. He called the Holy Spouse of Jesus Christ a Babylon, a prostitute, a tool of Satan. He accused her of no longer having any truth, or charity, or sanctity. But Our Lord tells us that the tree is known by its fruit: *The good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*[2] Hence, while Protestantism was preaching the hatred of the upper classes and the plunder of ecclesiastical property, encouraging religious to libertinism, and setting the world on fire, the Church gave men one of the most beautiful presents imaginable, such a touching proof of her maternal charity that it is impossible not to recognise her as the ever lawful Spouse of the God of Charity.

All the passions set in motion by the fever of Paganism and by the doctrines of Luther and Calvin, and the revolutions that followed as a natural consequence, as well as the general decay and loss of faith, led to the development of the most humiliating disease that can afflict the human species. Madness became very common: the number of lunatics exceeded all the proportions that it had ever before attained in Europe. Yes, we may well say it, now that science has established the fact, and formulated it in mathematical terms: *From the loss of faith to the loss of reason there is but one step; the less faith among a people, the more fools.*[3] The Church

[1] Hélyot, t. IV, p. 76 *et suiv.* [2] *Matt.*, vii, 16, 17.

[3] See the learned researches of Dr. Esquirol.—The progress of insanity since the Revival of Paganism is now a fact so evident that it strikes even men

therefore anticipates this new calamity, and comes to repair the evil of which Paganism, and its daughter, the Reformation, are the principal causes.

In those days, the Order of St. John of God was founded. Besides the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the religious belonging to it made a fourth, that of serving the sick, especially the insane. O Catholic Charity, how admirable thou art! Knowing the weakness and fickleness of the human heart, thou dost fasten it by a chain that cannot be broken, here to the bed of the plague-stricken, there to the dungeon of the slave, elsewhere to the cell of the madman! And the Religion which, for eighteen centuries, has inspired and maintained such devotedness among millions of persons, has nothing in it supernatural! If this great miracle of charity does not come from God, tell us whence it comes.

The founder of the new Order was St. John of God. He was born in Portugal, in 1495, of parents little favoured with the goods of fortune, but pious and charitable. A desire to travel induced him, while yet of a tender age, to leave his family and his country. His departure caused his mother so much grief that she died at the end of three weeks. In the meantime, the young prodigal soon found himself deprived of all resources, and reduced to such misery that he was obliged to go to service in order to be able to live. He took service under a master shepherd, and was employed in tending flocks: he was then about ten years of age. Notwithstanding the rashness of his flight, he lived in this state with all the innocence of a true Christian.

Some years afterwards, he enlisted in a company of infantry. Unfortunately, the corruption prevailing among his comrades seized on his virtue. He gradually lost the fear of God, and abandoned nearly all his exercises of piety. But God watches over His elect. If He permits them to fall into some faults, it is that they may know their own weakness and edify the Church by their repentance. He did not leave the young soldier a long time in disorders. One day John was thrown from his horse, and so severely hurt that he lay for more than an hour motionless and speechless. Having somewhat recovered himself, he understood how near he had been to the loss of his life, and began to reflect seriously on the

of the world. At a debate in the House of Lords, 5th of February, 1838, it was proved that the number of lunatics had increased wonderfully in England since the time of Henry VIII. In the last century, an Italian physician calculated that there were then in Italy, proportionately to its population, seven times less lunatics than in Protestant countries.—At present (1868) the number of mad people in all Europe is attaining proportions hitherto unknown.

state of his soul. Placing himself on his knees, he recommended himself to the Blessed Virgin, and resolved to change his life. Faithful to his promise, he left the army and returned to his old state of a shepherd.

Far from the din of arms, John remembered what he had been in his youth, and the thoughts that burst on his mind awoke the deepest regrets. Henceforth, he consecrated the greater portion of the day and night to exercises of prayer and mortification; but he believed that he could do nothing more proper to satisfy the divine justice than to devote himself to the service of the miserable. He accordingly passed over into Africa, that he might endeavour to procure for Christian slaves all the consolation and help in his power. He also hoped to find in this country the crown of martyrdom, after which he ardently sighed. However, his confessor advised him to return to Spain. He obeyed.

Having been present at a sermon delivered by Father John of Avila, the most celebrated preacher in Spain, he was so affected by it that he burst into tears, and filled the whole church with his sobs and lamentations. He made a general confession, and no longer thought of anything but of making himself useful to the poor and the sick. During the day, he was continually near the pillows of their beds, lavishing on them the tenderest care, and rendering them services most painful to nature. About nine o'clock in the evening, he went out to beg for them. He would walk through the streets with a basket on his back and a pot on each arm. The rain, the wind, the cold—nothing could stay him. When he wished to ask alms for his dear sick ones, he used to cry out in a loud voice, *My brethren, do good for the love of God; my brethren, do good for the love of God!*

This extraordinary manner of soliciting aid, a manner at the same time so profoundly philosophical, drew everybody to the window, and abundance was given to feed the poor. The whole city of Grenada was edified by such conduct, and some charitable persons soon associated themselves with the servant of God. This was the origin of the *Brothers of Charity of St. John of God*, whose Order was approved by Pope St. Pius V.

The Saint continued till his death these works of mercy. Poor himself, he was often in absolute want. During his last illness, a lady, having come to visit him, found him lying with his clothes on in his little cell: his only covering was an old cassock. The Saint had only substituted for the stone that served him as a pillow the basket in which he used to place the alms that he gathered through the city. The sick and the poor burst into tears around his bed. The Bishop of the city came to see him, said Mass in his room, and

gave him the Last Sacraments. John was on his knees before the altar at which he had communicated when he expired: it was the 8th of March, 1550.

We have said that the Brothers of St. John of God proposed as their special end to take care of the insane. Of all the infirmities that can attack man, insanity is undoubtedly the most humiliating and most distressing. Deprived of his reason, the madman is like a beast, and often like a furious beast. Poor lunatics can expect nothing from the world but contempt, insults, and neglect. Cast off by their relatives, shut up like criminals in gloomy prisons, objects of the worst treatment, they grow vexed and angry in vain: the heat of their blood only makes their disease incurable. Christianity, the physician of all the ills of humanity, becomes their friend. It takes their case in hands, and the fruits of its zeal are amazing.

The Brothers of St. John of God established large, well-aired hospitals, surrounded with courts and gardens, and ornamented with everything that could help to restore peace to the minds of the poor creatures stricken with lunacy. With them the insane are neither contradicted nor thrown into dungeons, where the last glimmerings of reason are quenched. They are free, and all the day long they go about within the enclosure of the establishment according to their fancy. To hold them fast, the religious employ no means but gentleness. Thanks to their tender care, calmness returns to those unsettled heads; and many a time the Brothers of St. John of God have the happiness of restoring to families parents who were thought to have been for ever lost.

The prejudices against madness were so deeply rooted, when the Brothers of St. John of God ventured to undertake its cure, that it was only with great difficulty they obtained permission to execute their generous design. To disgust them with the idea, by persuading them that it was useless, the civil authorities directed that the holy founders of the Order should be led into the loathsome subterranean prisons in which a few of the most furious lunatics were confined. But here, as everywhere else in the doings of Christianity, the divine seal shines forth brightly. A prodigy comes to the aid of the charitable Brothers, and proves that their generous sacrifice is pleasing to God.

In the depth of these gloomy retreats, there lay on a little straw one who passed for the most dangerous of madmen. His hands and feet were laden with chains, made fast to the wall. His torn clothes announced that he often used violence towards himself, and that it was a risk to go near him. At his feet were to be seen an old

broken pitcher of water and a loaf of black bread very much dirtied: the only food of the unfortunate lunatic.

When he saw afar off, by the glare of the torches carried by the keepers, a party of people coming to visit him, he rose with one bound to his feet, and, shaking his chains, put himself in a threatening attitude. His bristling hair, his pale eye and its wild glance, this strange mixture of idiotcy and fury, the depth of the dungeon, the silence interrupted only by the rattling of chains, all gave the scene a mournful and terrifying character that might well alarm persons not full of the Spirit of God.

Having arrived a short distance from the terrible madman, all the keepers stood. The superior of the Brothers of St. John of God advanced alone towards him, and, embracing him affectionately, patting him with his hand as one does in taming an unruly horse, gave him to understand by sweet caresses that he was come for no other purpose than to do him good. Instead of rage, there was no longer anything to be seen painted on the madman's face but an indescribable amazement. Many years had rolled by since he had become aware of the presence of men save by their blows and other ill treatment.

It was therefore a wonder to him, a wonder for which his weak brain could not account, to see a man not only abstain from treating him harshly, but lovingly assure him that he sympathised with him in his trials and sorrows. From this moment, the religious was absolute master of the prisoner. To the great alarm of the spectators, he removed his chains, put proper clothes on him, took him by the arm, and led him away to the house that he had prepared. A year afterwards this madman, so dangerous, was in the bosom of his family, surrounded by his children, blessing along with them the good Brothers of St. John, and thanking Heaven for sending him such kind friends to restore him to liberty, reason, and life.[1]

The foundation of the Order of St. John of God and so many other Infirmarian Orders that appeared in the sixteenth century, all those miracles of divine charity gloriously vindicated the Catholic Church from the reproach of infidelity addressed to her by Protestants. God would also confound His enemies by letting them see the venom and vanity of their doctrines. For this purpose, He draws forth from the treasures of His mercy a Religious Order remarkable for its activity, its learning, and its union: a nursery of Saints and scholars, Martyrs and missionaries, it will be one of the grandest defences of Religion against Protestantism.

[1] See Butler, 8th March; Hélyot, t. IV, p. 131. *Hist. des Bienf. du Christ.*, t. I, p. 147.

At the very moment—in the same year, perhaps on the same day,—when Luther was issuing his first heretical propositions, St. Ignatius, destined to strike him down, received at the siege of Pampeluna the wound that should for ever separate him from the world, prepare the way for his conversion, and lead him to the foundation of his celebrated Society. Retiring to the cave of Manresa, he wrote his "Spiritual Exercises," that methodical code of piety which served to form his Order and to repeople all others: a golden book, which is said to have made more conversions than it contains letters. Afterwards, when Calvin began to gain disciples in Paris, St. Ignatius, who had come to study in this city, assembled his companions to make war on the enemies of the Faith. Lastly, when Henry VIII., King of England, assumed the title of Head of the English Church, and commanded his subjects, under pain of death, to efface the name of the Pope from all their books, St. Ignatius laid the foundations of his Order, which made profession of particular obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff.

The illustrious founder of the Society of Jesus was born in Spain, in the year 1491. His parents sent him at an early age to the court. But Ignatius, who was passionately fond of glory, soon decided on embracing a military life. His conduct was not very regular: wholly taken up with the vanities and pleasures of the world, he was far from forming his manners according to the maxims of the Gospel. He lived thus till, at the age of twenty-nine years, God opened his eyes.

While defending the city of Pampeluna, besieged by the French, Ignatius had his leg injured by a gun-ball. Falling into the hands of the enemy, he was treated kindly and carefully; yet his cure was slow. Ignatius, weary, asked for some books. The "Lives of the Saints" were brought to him: it was here that God was waiting for him. Grace so touched his heart that he resolved on changing his life and imitating the Saints. When he was able to walk, he retired to a cave near Manresa, and there practised great austerities. He also made a general confession. Thence he set out for the Holy Land.

On his return, he applied himself earnestly to study, and went to Paris, where he converted Francis Xavier, by often repeating to him these words of Our Lord: *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*[1] Many disciples joined him, and they laid the foundations of the Company of Jesus. The Holy Father approved this new Order in the year 1540.

Ignatius lived a long time in Rome. He was often an object

[1] *Matt.*, xvi, 26.

of calumny and persecution; but his patience and humility were not to be moved. He had taken as his motto these words: "All for the greater glory of God!" The thought of doing everything for the glory of God made him insensible to the joys as well as the sorrows of this world. Many a time would he raise his eyes to heaven and say, "Oh, how poor this world appears to me when I look up to heaven!" This great Saint died in Rome on the 31st of July, 1556.

The Jesuits, St. Ignatius's children, are an Order established for the following ends: (*a*) to educate youth; (*b*) to procure the salvation of Catholics by preaching, hearing confessions, writing good books, &c.; and (*c*) to carry on missions for the conversion of heretics and infidels. Besides the usual vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, they make a vow to go wherever the Sovereign Pontiff may wish to send them. They accept no ecclesiastical dignity, unless obliged to do so by an express command of the Pope. The Order of the Jesuits has had the glory of giving to the world the St. Paul of modern times—the Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, of whom we are now going to speak.[1]

Francis Xavier was born on the 5th of April, 1506, at the castle of Xavier in Spain, of parents as distinguished by their virtue as by their rank. Gentle, cheerful, intelligent, affable, Francis was loved by everybody from his childhood. At the age of eighteen, he was sent to Paris, where he gave himself so earnestly to study that he soon outstripped all his fellow-students. His course ended, he was appointed professor of philosophy.

Unfortunately, Xavier laboured only for this world. The applause that he received was flattering to his vanity and ambition. St. Ignatius, who had come to Paris with a view to forming a society devoted to the salvation of the neighbour, proposed to Xavier to become a member of it. The young professor, full of worldly ideas, scornfully rejected the proposal made by Ignatius: he even rallied him on all occasions. His contempt did not dishearten Ignatius, who bore it not only meekly but cheerfully. From time to time, however, he would repeat to Xavier this maxim of the Gospel: *What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?*[2]

All this made little impression on the young worldling. Ignatius then took him by his foibles: he began to praise his learning and talents, and even offered him money to help him out of some difficulties. Xavier was touched. Grace worked on his heart: his conversion was decided on. He attached himself hence-

[1] Hélyot, t. VII, 452. [2] *Matt.*, xvi, 26.

forth to St. Ignatius, and the zeal which he had shown in the pursuit of learning grew much stronger in the pursuit of virtue. The two new athletes of the Faith soon set out with a few companions for Rome, where they offered their services to the Holy Father.

This was the solemn moment when, under the influence of a pagan spirit, a great part of Europe began to lose the light of Faith, of which it had rendered itself unworthy. Sophists inundated the world with errors borrowed from the ancient Greeks and Romans. Classical scholars and pagan artists lent their demoralising aid by their corrupt works. Protestants shut their ears, not to hear the maternal voice of the Church calling them back to the fold: they even answered her addresses with insults. What Religion owed to her character as a mother was done: she then recollected that she was the Daughter of Heaven. With the noble pride becoming her, she said, *Since you judge yourselves unworthy of the truth, I make ready to take it to other nations.*[1]

A new world—America and the Indies—was waiting for her. Nothing was needed but a man to grasp the sacred torch, and carry it beyond the seas: this man was Xavier. Chosen by the Vicar of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to the nations of the East, he left Rome at the very moment when Germany, Switzerland, and England were breaking the last ties that held them to the Ancient Church. A fleet, in readiness to set sail, awaited him at the port of Lisbon. The Providential man, the new Paul, goes on board, holding in his hand the sacred torch which an angry Heaven has withdrawn from the peoples of the North. He arrives in the Indies. The divine light shines on those vast regions covered with the darkness of death. It spreads rapidly. To give authority to the words of the new apostle, God bestows on him the gift of miracles. He raises to life several dead persons, and speaks several languages that he has never learned. The astonished pagans run to hear him, and are converted in crowds. The conquests of Xavier soon help to indemnify the Church, by giving her new sheep for those which she has lost.

The holy Missionary was continually travelling about. Everywhere he preached, catechised, baptised, visited the sick. It is calculated that with his own hand he regenerated more than eleven hundred thousand idolators. Learning that beyond the Indies there was a great country called Japan, he resolved on going to it. In vain was he told that he was rushing to certain death: nothing could stay his zeal. "To gain a little gold, merchants are not

[1] *Act.*, xiii. 46.

afraid to expose themselves to a thousand dangers; should I be less courageous to gain souls?" Scarcely had he landed in Japan, when he began to preach the Gospel. New miracles confirmed his doctrine. Among others, he raised to life a young girl of rank, dead for twenty-four hours. These miracles won respect for Religion; but an outrage committed against Father Fernandez, a companion of Xavier's, contributed much to the conversion of the infidels.

One day, as this Missionary was preaching in a public market-place, a man belonging to the mob drew near as if to speak to him and spat in his face. The Father, without uttering a single word or showing the least emotion, took out his handkerchief, wiped away the phlegm, and went on quietly with his discourse. Everyone was surprised at such heroic moderation. Those whom the insult had at first excited to laughter were seized with admiring wonder. One of the most learned doctors of the town, who was present, said to himself, A law that inspires such courage and greatness of soul, that enables one to gain such a complete victory over himself, must have come from Heaven. The sermon over, he acknowledged that the preacher's virtue had touched him, and asked for baptism, which was solemnly administered to him. This illustrious conversion was the cause of a great many others.

The seed of the Gospel, sown in Japan by St. Francis Xavier, bore such fruit that, when persecution broke out, there were to be counted in this empire four hundred thousand Christians. Yet the holy missionary was not satisfied. On the contrary, his conquests only gave new flames to his zeal. He conceived the design of carrying the Faith into the vast empire of China. He soon arrived in sight of this desired land. He contemplated it from afar like another Moses gazing on the Promised Land; but God, pleased with his good will, judged that it was time to give him the crown which he had merited by so many labours.

The Saint fell sick at Sancian, a small island only a few miles distant from the coast of China. He was left on the shore, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, especially a most bitter north wind. A Portuguese trader, pitying Xavier's state, brought him into his hut, which was little better than the shore, for it was open on all sides. The disease continued its course. At length, on the 2nd of December, which was a Friday, the Saint pronounced these words: *O Lord! in Thee I have placed my hopes; I shall never be confounded.*[1] Then, transported with a heavenly joy, which shone on his countenance, he sweetly gave up the ghost: in 1552—in the forty-sixth year of his age, and after spending ten years and a half

[1] Psal. xxx

in the Indies. His body, preserved incorrupt, is shown in the City of Goa, formerly the capital of India. When St. Francis Xavier wanted to animate himself to the conversion of the infidels, he would repeat the words, "O most holy Trinity!" This seemed his war-cry against the devils.[1]

Thanks to St. Francis Xavier and his worthy fellow-labourers, that Faith of the Roman Church which some people hoped to extinguish in Europe shines with new splendour in the vast regions of the East! Thus the Church, the true Church, has always been Catholic, has always been the city of Isaias, built on a mountain, and visible to all peoples, and which all peoples should enter if they would share in the blessings of the God of Jacob.

Hail, then, O Roman Church! immortal Church! To what shall I compare thee? While sects and heresies have given out their false gleams for a moment in some corner of the earth, and the next moment disappeared never to return, like those deceitful fires which flicker in marshes during the darkness of the night, thy beneficent light, O glorious Church of God! O Catholic Church! is never extinguished. Like the bright day-star, thou dost pass majestically from one country to another. If any nation is so ungrateful as to despise thy benefits, thou dost let it relapse into the horrors of the night from which thou didst deliver it, and carry elsewhere the light and life of which thou art the inexhaustible source!

What more shall I say? The Catholic Church is a magnificent river. If dikes unwisely raised obstruct its course, it directs its salutary waters to other places without losing in its abundance or in its usefulness, and speeds its way to fertilise new fields. An old tree, full of life and vigour, if the axe cuts off a few of its branches, the vivifying sap that fed them goes elsewhere—sends out new shoots or makes the remaining branches produce more excellent fruit.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank thee for having justified and consoled Thy Church, our tender Mother, by raising up great Saints and zealous Apostles for her. Grant us the charity of St. John of God and of St. Francis Xavier.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, I will often repeat the words of St. Ignatius: *All for the greater glory of God!*

[1] Godescard, Dec. 3.

LESSON XLIX.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SIXTEENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church defended and consoled: Council of Trent; St. Charles Borromeo; St. Teresa and the Carmelites; Blessed Angela of Brescia and the Ursulines; Brothers of the Pious Schools; Congregation of Our Lady; Somasques; Infirmarian Brothers of Obregon; Brothers of a Good Death; St. Camillus of Lellis.

Xavier, when dying, had bequeathed to the Church nearly a whole world of fervent neophytes. It would seem that the Spouse of the Man-God should find in this splendid compensation wherewith to console herself for the pains that she had been made to suffer by ungrateful Europe. But she still bewailed the loss of her children: nothing is so difficult to console as the heart of a mother. She tried therefore a last effort to bring back the prodigals, or at least to confirm in the truth those who had remained faithful, by putting an end to all uncertainties, dispelling all clouds, tracing exactly the limits of sound and heretical doctrine.

For this purpose she assembled perhaps the most learned of her General Councils at Trent, one of the chief towns in the Tyrol. It lasted eighteen years with several interruptions, having been opened in 1545 and closed in 1563. There were present at it five Cardinal Legates of the Holy See, three Patriarchs, thirty-three Archbishops, two hundred and thirty-five Bishops, seven Abbots, seven Generals of Monastic Orders, and a hundred and sixty Theologians.

The leaders of the Protestant party, whose errors were destroying Religion and covering Europe with streams of blood, were invited to the Council; but they refused to go. The Church examined their books, and judged and condemned their doctrine. The august assembly also made some wise regulations for the correction of public morals; but these regulations, though received in Catholic countries, were only slowly established. It was now that God raised up one of those favoured souls whom He gives from age to age to His Church, to be the mainspring of all great enterprises.

Charles Borromeo, the model of Bishops and the restorer of ecclesiastical discipline, was born at Arona, near Milan, of one of the most illustrious families in Italy. While yet young, he was engaged to the ecclesiastical state. His rare piety, his virginal purity, his zeal for the service of the altar, and his great capacities for business soon raised him to the first dignities of the Church.

Having become Cardinal and Archbishop of Milan, he showed himself by his many virtues worthy of the high rank in which Providence had placed him.

Thanks to his zeal, the Council of Trent was brought to a close. While by pressing solicitations with Bishops and Princes, he was hastening the publication of its decrees, he held several Synods at Milan to receive and apply them in his own district. Beginning the reform with himself, he made the most innocent pleasures give way to grave and severe occupations. He parted with all his benefices, forbade himself the use of silk garments, and embraced a kind of life exceedingly austere. In the latter years of his too short existence, he carried his frugality so far that he had no other food than bread and water, with a few legumes.

His house was so well ordered that it resembled a seminary rather than the palace of an Archbishop. Hence, there was nothing to be spoken of in Italy but the sanctity and zeal of Cardinal Borromeo. He made the visitation more than once of his immense diocese, travelled through the whole of his ecclesiastical province, and penetrated even into the deep valleys of the Grisons and the Swiss. In his apostolic journeys, he was to be seen walking on foot, enduring hunger, thirst, and the inclemency of the weather, and climbing the steepest mountains, to search for wandering sheep, and to bring them back to the fold.

But his charity never shone on any occasion with greater lustre than during the plague of Milan. This terrible scourge comes. Forthwith, the rich and the great of the world abandon the city. The holy Archbishop is advised to retire to a place of safety and to keep himself for his diocese. He is content to answer, *The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.* Then, offering his life as a sacrifice to God, he devotes himself to the service of the plague-stricken. From this moment, his charity knows no bounds. Day and night in action, he is everywhere to be seen bringing relief and comfort. But the contagion spreads, the resources are exhausted, there is nothing left for the unfortunate. Charles will find resources in his extraordinary charity. He borrows. He sells his property, his furniture, even his bed. Having become rich for the poor by becoming poor himself, he carries to the sick the medicines or the food that will allay their sufferings. At length, the anger of God is appeased by the devotedness of the pastor: the plague disappears.

St. Charles profited of the misfortune that had just been experienced to extend more and more a wise reform. Convinced that on the education of youth depends the future of society, he gave a portion of his patrimony to found in the city of Pavia a college,

wherein the young Milanese nobles might receive, without danger to their morals, that instruction which makes useful men. This magnificent foundation, known as the *Borromean College*, has for three centuries rendered the most eminent services to the native region of its illustrious patron. The Saint, who knew perfectly well the inmost thoughts of the Council of Trent, to which he had been secretary, took good care to exclude pagan authors from its course of studies. If he was obliged to admit a mixture, history tells us that we must attribute it to the blind requirements of parents, who, fanaticised by the *Renaissance*, threatened to send their children to the Protestant universities of Germany, where, with what was supposed to be fine Latin, they would have learned the modern errors.

Seven years after the date of the plague, the man of God went —on the 3rd of November, 1584—to receive the eternal reward of so many virtues and sacrifices, bearing with him to the tomb the regrets of his flock whom he had cherished as a father, of the Holy See to which he had been a powerful support, and of the Church which his life had edified, his zeal extended, and his prudence truly reformed. What society, separated from Catholic unity, ever produced such a man ?[1]

While St. Charles was labouring to re-establish ecclesiastical discipline, and zealous Missionaries were carrying to barbarous lands the good tidings of the Gospel, and heresy, growing more furious, was sending generous Martyrs to Heaven, there were new institutions appearing in the Church. A reform took place in the cloister, and the Monastic Orders renewed their primitive fervour. The chief instrument of these last wonders was St. Teresa. This virgin—this reformer—this noble, loving, heavenly soul was born at Avila in Spain, on the 28th of March, 1515. It is herself who is going to relate her life for us.

"My father," she says, "took great pleasure in reading good books. He had many of them in the vulgar tongue, so that his children might read them. My mother corresponded with his wishes, by taking care to make us pray to God, and by inspiring us with devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, which I began to feel from the age of six or seven years. I had another great advantage, that of never seeing my parents esteem or favour anything but virtue: both had much of it. My father was very charitable towards the poor, and full of compassion for the sick. He treated his servants with singular kindness. He was most sincere in his words: never did anyone hear him curse or swear. As

[1] *Hist. abr. de l'Eglise*, p. 410.

for modesty, he was particularly exact concerning it. My mother was also exceedingly virtuous. Though she was very handsome, she made so little account thereof that, while only thirty-three years of age when she died, a person very old could not have lived in a more edifying manner. Her temper was wonderfully sweet. She had great spirit, but so little health that she was frequently laid up. Her life was chequered with heavy trials, and she closed it like a Christian. Though I loved all my brothers very much, yet there was one whom I loved more tenderly than the rest. He was nearly of my own age. We used to read the *Lives of the Saints* together. It seemed to me, while thinking of the Martyrs, that they had purchased the happiness of Heaven cheaply, and I felt an ardent desire to die like them. My brother entered into the same sentiments."

This idea so filled the minds of these two children that they one day fled from the paternal roof with the design of going to some region of infidels, among whom they hoped to find the crown of martyrdom. As they were leaving the town, they were met by one of their uncles, who brought them back to their mother. Both were well scolded; and the brother did not fail to lay all the blame on his sister.

Blessed with a generous soul, Teresa made it her delight to relieve the poor, as far as she could. "I gave alms," she says, "as much as I could; but my powers were small." She was twelve years old when her mother died. Heartbroken to see herself an orphan, she ran in tears to cast herself at the feet of an image of the Blessed Virgin, whom she besought to hold the place of a mother to her. This act, full of childlike simplicity and confidence seemed to her afterwards one of the most advantageous in her life. To the protection of Mary she always thought herself indebted for the numberless graces with which the Lord had loaded her, especially at the time when she ran a risk of losing both her innocence and her love of duty.

The time of which we speak was that of her youth, a time made so critical by dangerous reading and bad company. "I gave myself to reading romances. This fault, into which my mother's example had led me, caused such a coolness in my good desires that it made me commit many other faults. I first took pleasure in adorning myself, and I felt springing up in my heart a desire to please. My hands and my head-dress were the objects of my care I was fond of perfumes and all other vanities. Several years passed in this excessive love of dress and fashion without my ever suspecting that there was the least evil therein; but I now see how much there must have been. I did not profit of the example of one

of my sisters who was very wise and virtuous; on the contrary, I was greatly injured by the bad qualities of a relative who used often to come to see me. Her conversations so changed me that the virtuous dispositions which I had received from Heaven could no longer be seen in me. I ran a risk of losing my innocence: the goodness of God happily preserved me."

Teresa's father, perceiving that his daughter had no longer the same piety, and that her remissness came from the intimacy existing between her and her relative, placed her as a boarder in a convent of Augustinian Nuns: she was only fifteen years old yet. The company of virtuous persons soon renewed in her heart the pious sentiments of her early childhood: the Lord opened her eyes to her wanderings. Docile to grace, Teresa made a complete change in her conduct; and, at the time of her returning from the convent, she thought seriously of giving herself to God.

She presented herself to the Carmelites, and begged the favour of being received among the novices. This step cost her a great deal, through the regret which she felt to leave her tender-hearted father. But grace overcoming nature, Teresa entered the convent, and soon received the habit. God visited her with bitter sufferings, which lasted nearly all her life. She bore them patiently, and even cheerfully. In the height of her pains, she would repeat these words of Job, which used to comfort and strengthen her very much: *If we have received good things from the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?*[1] She arrived at such perfection in the love of sufferings, that she would often say to Our Lord, *To suffer or to die!*

Her infirmities did not prevent her from concerning herself about the salvation of the neighbour. She undertook to revive in her Order the fervour of the primitive rule. It would be impossible to tell all the difficulties and persecutions that she had to encounter, before succeeding in her efforts; but God was with her. Carmel flourished again as in the days of yore, and the Church found, the Church still finds, in the virtues and prayers of Carmelite Nuns an indemnification for the numerous evils and scandals afflicting her.

Meanwhile, Teresa's great labours had impaired her health. On the 3rd of October, 1582, she felt herself growing very weak, foretold her approaching death, and asked for the Sacraments. As soon as she saw the Holy Viaticum, her strength seemed to return, her countenance was all inflamed, the ardour of her faith shone in her eyes. She turned towards the Saviour, and, sitting up to receive Him with more respect, exclaimed in a loving transport, "O my Lord and

[1] *Job*, ii, 10.

my Spouse! the hour which I have so much desired is come. The moment of my deliverance is at hand."

At nine o'clock in the evening, she asked for Extreme Unction, which she received with the most tender piety. Until the moment when she lost the use of speech, she could be heard repeating this verse of the psalmist: *A contrite and humble heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise.*[1] The pains of her agony were prolonged to the next day. Her head resting on the arm of one of her sisters, and her eyes fixed on a crucifix which she held in her hand, she calmly awaited death, which came to crown her labours and virtues during the night of the 4th of October, 1582.[2] One of St. Teresa's greatest virtues was confidence in God. Neither contradictions nor persecutions, nor poverty, nor the desertion of creatures, could ever disturb her. One day as she was going to found a monastery, having only five halfpence in her purse, she remarked pleasantly to her companion, "Let us not be discouraged: Teresa and five halfpence—that is nothing; but Teresa, five halfpence, and Our Lord—that is everything!"

Having spoken of the mother, let us say a word of the daughters. In summer, the Carmelites rise at five o'clock, and make their prayer till six; in winter, they rise at six, and make their prayer till seven. Before supper, they have also an hour's prayer. They fast from the Exaltation of the Holy Cross till Easter, and never eat meat except during sickness. On the fast days of the Church, and on all the Fridays of the year, except those between Easter and Pentecost, they do not use eggs or potage. They take the discipline several times a week. On Fridays particularly they take it for the propagation of the Faith, for the preservation of states and princes, for their benefactors, for the souls in Purgatory, for captives, and for *those who are in mortal sin.*

Let it not be said that the Contemplative Orders are useless to the world! How many sinners converted, and misfortunes averted, through the voluntary expiations of these innocent victims! The Carmelites wear a brown habit and scapular; they sleep on straw-mattresses laid on boards; and, for their feet, they have cord sandals called *alpergates*, with stockings of a coarse stuff like that in their habits.[3]

St. Teresa had the consolation of seeing in her lifetime sixteen convents of virgins and fourteen of men embrace her austere Institute, which a little while afterwards spread over all Christendom. This admirable reformation, effected contrary to all human foresight, in an age when great sins were laying the world waste, is,

[1] Psal. l. [2] Godescard, October 14. [3] Hélyot. t. I, p. 358.

We repeat, an evident proof of the truth, already so often noticed, that Providence never fails to find a counterpoise for the iniquities of men.

Purity of morals, fervour, and piety, restored among the Clergy and in the Monastic Order, spread, like the waters of a plentiful stream, to the Faithful, and nearly the whole face of the earth was renewed. To obtain this glorious triumph, which, by confounding heresy, schism, and scandal, would prove the unchanging holiness of the Catholic Church, God employed all the resources of His Providence. On the pontifical chair He places a great Saint, firm as Peter, enlightened as Leo, and zealous as Gregory, one whose very name is a eulogy; would you wish to know him? He is called St. Pius V. Great Bishops shine in the sees of France, Germany, Spain, and Italy. And Francis de Sales is at Geneva!

More than fifty Religious Orders or Congregations are formed or reformed. Some, propagators of the truth among the peoples, either preserve the Faith among them, or restore it by scattering the clouds of error. Others, repairers of the evils caused by public crimes, relieve all human infirmities, and show heresy that it may well draw down scourges on the world but that the Catholic Church alone can apply a remedy to them.

Among the Orders destined to preserve and to extend the truth, we behold appearing, after the Order of the *Theatines*, that of the *Barnabites*, of which three Italian gentlemen were the founders;[1] that of the *Fathers of the Christian Doctrine*, for which the Church is indebted to the venerable Cæsar de Buso;[2] and many others besides. Obliged to limit ourselves, we shall make known only two of them, but the two most celebrated and most widely spread, namely, the *Ursulines* and the *Poor of the Mother of God*.

The Ursuline Nuns were established by Blessed Angela of Brescia in 1537. Angela, surnamed "of Brescia" on account of her residing in this town, was born in Italy at Desenzano, a little town on Lake Garda, not far from the place where St. Leo stopped the progress of Attila, and where the battle of Solferino was fought. An orphan from her tenderest years, and virtuous as soon as an orphan, she was intrusted along with her sister to an uncle who took great care of their education. Both, though mere children, placed all their delight in practices of devotion, not common and ordinary, but fervent and difficult.

Thus, they rose at night to say their prayers, after having taken some little rest on the bare ground, or on a few hard boards. To this mortification, so painful at their age, they added frequent fasts.

[1] Hélyot, t. IV., p. 106 [2] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

Desiring to live only for God, they one day fled with the intension of retiring to a kind of hermitage; but their uncle followed them, and brought them back. Angela, who was the younger, had no other consolation than the company of her sister: God took her away. She felt this death so much the more sensibly as she looked on her sister as her support and guide in the way of virtue. Though full of grief, the holy child bore this trial with admirable resignation.

Alone henceforth, Angela put all her hopes in the God of orphans. She neglected no means to deserve His love. Arrived at the age of twenty-six years, and confirmed in virtue by prayers, fasts, and all other kinds of austerities, our Saint was inspired by God to make herself useful to her neighbour by founding a Religious Congregation. It was at the moment when Protestants were destroying monasteries, condemning virginity, and trampling under foot the most solemn vows. But God is always watching over His Church. Let us admire how wisely He applies a remedy to evil! We have seen Him century after century establishing Religious Orders, houses of penance and prayer, secure asylums against corruption; but, to profit thereof, they should be entered. Now, how many persons could not or would not quit the world! The point therefore was to save these souls in the very midst of the dangers of a secular life. Sinners should be sought out in their own houses, and, as it were, compelled to open their eyes to the light. They should be run after and brought back into the way of virtue.

The Blessed Angela understood, or rather God enabled her to understand this need. She wished therefore that all her daughters should remain in the world, each one at home, so as to spread more easily the good odour of Jesus Christ, and to be useful to all sorts of people by the example of their virtues. To seek out the afflicted in order to console and instruct them, to relieve the poor, to visit hospitals, to serve the sick, and to accept humbly all the labours imposed on them by charity, was the first law that she gave them. Though her daughters were free, and for the most part of quality, she obliged them to become as it were the slaves of all, that, in imitation of the Apostle, they might gain a greater number of souls to God. Hence, in towns so happy as to possess them, the spirit of the Early Christians was soon to be seen springing up anew, as well for the relief of the poor as for the instruction of the ignorant.

By a foresight which always accompanies wisdom from on high, Angela ordained that the form of life which she had introduced might be changed according to the exigencies of succeeding times.

Now, circumstances having changed, most of those missionary virgins embraced a common life in Congregations, or chose the solitude of the Cloister, there to remain shut up for the rest of their days. The Order of the Ursulines spread with amazing rapidity: a striking proof of its usefulness and of the protection of Heaven! It has given birth to more than three hundred and fifty communities, which at present occupy themselves chiefly with the education of girls of all ranks.

Everything connected with the Ursulines breathes the spirit of their holy foundress: nothing, even to their name, but should be a monument of her profound humility! As a matter of fact, the blessed Angela, having been named superioress of the Congregation, persuaded her associates to place themselves under the protection of St. Ursula, who had formerly ruled so many virgins and led them to martyrdom. Hence this Order was called that of St. Ursula.[1]

While the Church was seeking out, even amid the distractions of the world, weak and wandering souls, she also cast her maternal looks on childhood. This age was so much the more worthy of her solicitude as it was then more exposed to the seductions of evil doctrine. In order to help her, God sent her one of those rare men whom He reserves in the treasure-house of His mercy. Joseph Calasanctius went to Rome in the year 1592. Born in the kingdom of Aragon, the Spanish noble joined to the learning of Doctors the humility of the Saints, and that sublime enthusiasm for good which characterised his fellow-countryman, Ignatius of Loyola.

His heart was grieved to see a multitude of little boys, left in the streets by the negligent complicity of their parents, spending their days in vagabondism under the pretext of begging their bread. The teaching of the Catechism, renewed only every Sunday in the parish churches, could not bear fruit all the week. Besides, Rome had, at this period, none but very moderately paid schoolmasters. Joseph begged them to welcome into their schools these poor little waifs; but they refused to take such a charge without an increase of salary. This tender friend of childhood knocked at one door after another: he was everywhere met with excuses more or less plausible.

Seeing all his efforts useless, he resolved to undertake the desired work himself. In November, 1597, he founded, in the district beyond the Tiber, the first public gratuitous school to be

[1] Hélyot, t. IV, p. 150.—The beautiful legend of St. Ursula and her numerous companions has lately been triumphantly vindicated by one of our most learned antiquaries. (See the *Univers*, Dec. 25th, 1840.)

seen in Europe. Some good Priests joined him, and the school soon counted several hundred pupils. The instruction of the poor being one of the most important works of piety, St. Joseph gave his institution the name of the *Pious Schools;* hence, that of *Scolopi*, which his religious bear. He set himself to teach the children the Catechism, reading, writing, and arithmetic. To teaching, the holy founder added the providing of books and all the other little articles that the poverty of his dear children would not permit them to buy.

These weak beginnings soon gave rise to a society of teaching Priests, who decreed to Joseph the title of Prefect of the Pious Schools. He himself applied to his Congregation the touching name of the *Poor of the Mother of God and of the Pious Schools.*— *Poverty, Mary, Childhood :* these three words, which go straight to the heart, drew down innumerable blessings, and secured abundant aid for the devoted men who adopted them as their motto. Besides the three ordinary vows, the religious of this venerable Order make that of teaching. They receive gratuitously children of every condition from the age of seven years, and give them lessons for three hours in the morning and the same time in the evening. The pupils go to Mass daily, and say prayers at the beginning and the end of classes. They also meet on Sundays in their rooms to practise various religious exercises : among others, to recite the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin.

Every year, about Easter, there is a little retreat given to them. At the close of school, the good religious accompany the scholars home to their parents : in doing this, the children arrange themselves in rows, and set off two by two for the different quarters of the city. Thus, noise and disorder are avoided, as well as the accidents that might happen among so many children, if left to themselves. St. Joseph's religious are very numerous in Italy and Spain. God everywhere blesses their establishments with many sweet consolations on earth, until such times as He will give them the bright crowns which He has in store for them in Heaven.

While St. Calasanctius was securing to little boys the inestimable benefit of a Christian education, the Blessed Peter Fourrier was completing the work of Providence by establishing a Religious Order devoted to the instruction of young girls. This holy Priest, whose memory is still held in benediction, was born on the 30th of November, 1564, at Mirecourt, a small town in Lorraine. After a youth spent in innocence and attended with brilliant success in study, Peter was raised to the Priesthood and appointed to the parish of Mattaincourt, a large village near the place of his birth. The intercourse of the inhabitants with Geneva, to which they sup-

plied wool, cloth, and lace; their wealth; and, as a consequence, their luxury and irreligion, had caused this parish to be decried throughout the whole country, so much so that it was called, only with too much justice, the *Little Geneva*. Such was the field that the new Priest had to clear and fertilise.

Full of confidence in God, the good Pastor put his hand courageously to the work. By the help of prayers and tears at the foot of his crucifix, paternal instructions, marks of affection, and examples of disinterestedness and every other heroic virtue set before his people, the holy man saw their hearts beginning to soften. In a short time, the whole parish is moved, and changes its face. The virtues of the early ages seem to have taken up their abode in Mattaincourt.

Zeal for the Word of God and attendance at Offices, regular and devout frequentation of the Sacraments, purity of morals, peace in families, hospitality towards strangers, generosity towards the poor, charity among neighbours, a holy emulation to see who will lead the most exemplary and Christian life: such are the virtues that flourish in this privileged corner of the earth. The change is so striking that good people, who lately shunned Mattaincourt as an occasion of sin, henceforth run thither to be eye-witnesses of the miracle of a people who have passed from death to life, and to hear the voice of the pastor of so happy a flock.'

But zeal is like a fire, which continually looks for new food. That of the servant of God was not satisfied: he should be always striving to do good and to save souls. God, who saw the preparation of his heart, heard the holy Priest by inspiring him with the thought of founding a Religious Congregation specially devoted to the education of young girls. For a long time he pondered over this project at the foot of the altar. Good works and all kinds of austerities were practised, as well to know clearly the will of God as to gather together the elements of the new Congregation. At length, the holy Priest, finding in his parish some young females whom his instructions had disabused of the vanities of the world, did not hesitate to communicate to them his design. They all listened to him gladly and began to visit the sick, and to bring relief to the poor, and to instruct little girls: by degrees they formed a school, according to the idea which Heaven had given to their holy director.

It was on the feast of Christmas in the year 1597 that they obtained permission to break entirely and solemnly with the world. After giving up everything precious that they had in the way of

' *Vie du Bienheureux*, p. 38.

ornaments, to serve for the erection of a tabernacle, the young maidens came to Midnight Mass in black dresses of the commonest stuff and the simplest shape. The Divine Infant, descending into their hearts by the Holy Communion, became the seal of the gift which on their side they made of themselves to Him. Since then the Congregation of Our Lady has always regarded Christmas night as the date of its birth, the Blessed Virgin as its Mother, and the Saviour's crib as its cradle.

Blessed of God, the young plant, though beaten by the winds, cast its roots deep and soon sent forth its protecting branches. The venerable father soon found it impossible to meet the demands made on him from all sides, so great was the eagerness shown to have some of his daughters. There is nothing in this ardour to surprise us, if we are acquainted with the end of the Congregation of Our Lady, the good spirit which animates it, and the services which it renders to society.

To the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Choir Religious add that of instruction in these terms: "I make a vow of never consenting that the instruction of young girls, permitted by the Holy See and commanded by our constitutions, should be abandoned." Never was a vow better kept. Faithful to the spirit of their holy founder, the Nuns of Our Lady have places set apart in all their houses where they give poor children the most careful instruction gratuitously. One house alone, which we delight to mention, that of the *Birds* at Paris, brings up more than two hundred such. These children are all externs, and have no intercourse with the boarders except three or four times a year, on certain festive days, when the latter take pleasure in serving them at table, and procuring them some innocent enjoyments.

At the time of the First Communion of the externs, those who have the happiness of being admitted thereto, are gratuitously lodged and entertained in the house during the preparatory retreat. There are also workshops, in which the children, after leaving the classes, learn to labour in such a manner as not to quit the maternal wing of Religion until the moment when they can earn a livelihood. To complete this admirable system of charity, the Congregation of Our Lady also adopts young orphan girls, whom it rears to the age of eighteen or twenty years. These children join the classes of the externs, hardly ever leave the house, and are trained to a simple and laborious life: it is necessary for their happiness that they should learn how to make out an existence.

With regard to young ladies confided to their care as boarders, the Nuns of Our Lady propose to themselves to form them to a sound and enlightened piety, and to teach them always to show the

practice of virtue easy and pleasant, so that they may one day successfully fulfil the Providential mission intrusted to them as daughters, sisters, wives, or mothers. In order to render efficacious the pious influence which these children may one day exercise in their homes, there is added to the practice of Religion well understood a sufficiency of instruction to make their company agreeable. Whoever sees the boarders of the "Birds" and the other houses of the Congregation of Our Lady gives the highest praise to their simplicity: it seems the very air that they breathe in these excellent retreats. The houses of Our Lady, like those of the Visitation, are independent of one another. The Order counts at present about eighteen of them.

Meanwhile, the blessed founder, having been appointed superior-general of his Order, undertook the visitation of his houses, and arrived, in 1636, at the town of Gray in Franche-Comté. After edifying it for four years by the example of every virtue, especially patience, and by the exercise of the humblest functions of the ministry, he was seized with a fever, which completely exhausted his strength. Feeling himself about to die, he requested the persons attending him to remind him during his agony of these words, which he used often to have on his lips: *Habemus bonum Dominum et bonam Dominam;* We have a good Master and a good Mistress.

It was with these dispositions of sweet confidence that he slept the sleep of the just in October 1640, the seventy-seventh year of his age. The heart of the blessed man was given to the town of Gray, and his body was carried back to his dear parish of Mattaincourt. On the 10th of January, 1730, the Sovereign Pontiff issued the decree of beatification which authoritatively placed the servant of God among the munerous protectors whom we have in Heaven.

The Church, while curing the diseases of the soul, occupied herself with corporal evils: her maternal charity was enough for all. In Italy, the venerable Father Jerome Æmiliani—the St. Vincent de Paul of the sixteenth century—devoted himself to the relief of all kinds of miseries. The poor, orphans, the sick, and sinners were the chief objects of his charity.

The life of this great Saint is not only a mirror of charity, but a miracle of the mercy of God and of the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin. Jerome Æmiliani was born at Venice, in 1481, of a most noble family. At fifteen years of age, the clash of arms interrupted the course of his studies. In spite of the tears of his mother, Jerome enlisted among the republican troops. The wicked example of his companions soon drew him into the paths of disorder. Yet, in 1508, the Venetians, who knew the ability and bravery of the young officer, intrusted to him the defence of

Castelnuovo, an important fortress in the neighbourhood of Treviso.

Jerome entered it with some troops. The governor, seeing himself closely pressed by the German army, and fearing to fall into the hands of the enemy, saved himself during the night, leaving dismay in the garrison. Æmiliani does not lose courage. He repairs the breaches, and endures many assaults; but his loss is heavy, and he has soon only a handful of men to contend with a host. The castle is taken. A part of the besieged are put to the sword, and Æmiliani, bound hand and foot, is thrown into a dark prison.

The thought of death, which he expected every moment, led him to some serious reflections on the disorders of his past life. He bewailed them bitterly, and promised to change his conduct if God delivered him out of the dangers that threatened him. Mary, the Refuge of Sinners, filially invoked, came to his aid. As happened to St. Peter in Jerusalem, the gates of his prison were opened, and his chains broken: the next morning the happy prisoner found himself carried to the gates of Treviso. His first care was to go to the church, where there is a miraculous picture of Mary venerated. He thanked her with all his heart, and hung up at her altar his miraculously broken chains.

Having become a new man, Jerome founded the Order of Somasque Religious, so called from the town of Somasco, not far from Brescia, where they had their first establishment. Always content in the midst of his painful labours, the venerable founder chose as the arms of his Order Our Lord bearing the Cross, with this motto: My yoke is sweet. *Onus meum leve.*[1]

In Spain there appeared another physician to wait on human infirmities, a physician such as the Catholic Church alone is able to make, that is to say, a devoted, charitable, patient man, never relying on himself, and never shrinking from any kind of disease, however disgusting. This new prodigy of charity was the venerable Father Bernardine d'Obregon, founder of the Infirmarian Brothers.

Bernardine was brought up in a Christian manner, but, having lost his father and mother, he engaged in the service of the King of Spain, wherein he little by little departed from the spirit of the Gospel. God, who was watching over this chosen soul, brought about an occasion of recalling him. Bernardine was one day passing through a street in Madrid that was very dirty and was being swept. One of the scavengers threw some mud accidentally

[1] Hélyot. t. IV, p. 235 *et suiv.*

on the young soldier's coat. The latter became so enraged that he struck the poor man. The sweeper, instead of showing any resentment, hastened to clean his coat, and thanked him for the blow that he had received, saying, "I have never seen myself so much honoured as by this blow, which I take gladly for the love of Jesus Christ."

Bernardine was so confused on hearing the man speak thus that he immediately begged his pardon, and went away reflecting on the example of patience that he had just witnessed. "What have I just heard?" he said to himself: "the ignorant carry off Heaven, and we, with our knowledge and our prudence, lose it miserably, slaves as we are to flesh and blood!" Converted that hour, he gave up the profession of arms, and devoted himself to the service of the sick. With a thoughtfulness that could never have come from anything but Catholic charity, he built the hospital of St. Anne at Madrid, for the reception of poor sick persons who were yet rather weak when leaving other hospitals. Thus, thanks to two Saints, Bernardine in Spain and Philip Neri in Rome, Europe saw the rise of the first Homes for Convalescents.

It is doubtless a great deal to give the sick that corporal care which they require; but, in the eyes of Faith, it is much more useful to procure for their souls those helps of which they often stand in the most pressing need. In effect, the tree falls on the side towards which it inclines, and lies there: so the Scripture tells us. This means that our death will be like our life, and on our death will depend our eternity. There is nothing therefore more important than to die well. Hence, in our last moments, the devil redoubles his efforts to destroy us, sure that, if a man dies badly, there is no more escape for him. But Our Saviour, on His side, loves souls too much not to defend them with a more than ordinary care. It was not enough for His tenderness to send His Priests to console, encourage, and strengthen His sick children: He establishes a Religious Order for these works of mercy. This is the Order known under the touching name of *Brothers of a Good Death* or *Clerks of the Infirm.*

The end of this charitable institution is to render to the neighbour every service of mercy, as well corporal as spiritual. Day and night at the bedside of the sick, these good religious leave no means untried to alleviate bodily suffering, and to procure for souls a happy passage from this world to the next. They administer medicines to them, help them to eat, make their beds, dress them, in a word, fulfil towards them all the duties of good and zealous servants. To the three vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, they add a fourth, that of giving to the sick all kinds of spiritual

help, and assisting them at the hour of death, even in times of plague.'

Join with this Order that of the *Burial Brothers*, of whom we have spoken, and you will see how tenderly God watches over the last moments of man, and over his lifeless remains. It would seem as if His mercy strove to sweeten as much as possible the severity of His justice, which condemns all to die. Let us admire, let us thank, this divine mercy; let us fear this justice. After the

[1] The Church has always shown the utmost anxiety to procure for her children a happy passage from time to eternity. To all the facts that we have read of, and that we have seen with our eyes, let us add the following details regarding the manner in which the *Canons Regular of St. Victor*, at Paris, used to prepare their dying brother to appear before God.

The Abbé, followed by the religious chanting the Penitential Psalms, entered the room of the sick man, and, before giving him the Holy Viaticum, addressed him thus :—

Brother, are you satisfied to die in the Christian Faith ?—Yes.

Are you glad to die in this habit ?—Yes.

Do you confess that you have lived ill, so that you may make no account whatever of your own merits?—Yes.

Do you repent thereof ?—Yes.

Do you confess that you have not lived as well as you should have done ?—Yes.

Do you repent thereof ?—Yes.

Have you a will to amend, in case you are allowed time ?—Yes.

Do you believe that the Lord God died for you ?—Yes.

Do you return Him thanks for having done so ?—Yes.

Do you confess that you cannot be saved otherwise than by His death ?—Yes.

Now therefore, while you are still alive, place all your confidence solely in the death of Jesus Christ, and in nought else. Commit yourself wholly to this death, cover yourself wholly with this death ; and, if the Lord God wish to judge you, say, "Lord, I place the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ between me and judgment; otherwise, I will not enter into discussion with Thee."

And if He say that you are a sinner, say, "Lord, I place the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ between Thee and my sins."

If He say that you have deserved damnation, say, "Lord, I place the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ between Thee and my demerits, and I offer His merits for those which I should have and which I have not."

And if He say that He is angry with you, say, "Lord, I place the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thee and Thine anger."

This done, the sick man says three times, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my soul ; Thou hast redeemed it, O Lord, the God of truth !" The brotherhood repeat the same words.

This confession ended, the Abbé presents the cross to the sick man, that he may kiss and adore it. When he has received the Sacraments, all come and embrace him, first the Abbé and then the others. Next follows the return in procession to the choir. Henceforth, the sick man is kept with new care, and the Abbé multiplies his visits to him.

. . . prius vero quam abbas infirmum communicet, alloquitur eum hoc modo, etc.

D. Mart., De antiq. Eccles. discipl. consuetud. canonic. Reg. S. Vict., Paris, c. lxxiii, p. 286, fol.

example of these holy religious, let us do everything in our power to procure for the sick a death precious in the sight of God. But it is time to make known the founder of another Order so worthy of the religion of charity. His life will afford us a new example of the goodness of God.

The founder of the Order of the *Brothers of a Good Death* was St. Camillus of Lellis. He was born in Italy on the 25th of May, 1550, in the little town of Bucchianico, in the province of Abruzzo. His father, who was a military man, neglected his education. Camillus was indeed sent to school; but his progress consisted only in learning to read and write. His great occupation was to play continually at cards and dice. When eighteen years of age, he adopted the profession of arms. Scarcely had he enlisted, when his father died and he himself fell sick. God, who wished to draw Camillus to things divine, began to inspire him henceforth with a disgust for the world: an interview with some Franciscan religious gave increase to this feeling. He was so edified with their humble and modest manner of life that he resolved on entering their Order, and wholly renouncing himself. With this view he went to an uncle of his, superior of one of the convents of the Order, and begged admission; but, whether on account of the young soldier's infirmities or that this father did not think his vocation strong enough, his proposal was not welcomed In point of fact, the hour of the conversion of Camillus was not yet come.

His stay with his uncle was not long. He set out for Rome, that he might obtain the cure of an ulcer that he had on his leg. Received into the Hospital of the Incurables, as a servant of the sick, he had to be dismissed a few months afterwards on account of his bad habits. His inclination for gaming was so great that he used often to quit his work, and even to go outside the hospital, in order to have some amusement.

Deprived of all means of existence, Camillus enlisted again with the Venetians in 1569. The war being over, he had the same lot as the other soldiers, who returned with empty hands. It was winter; the cold was most intense: moneyless and almost naked, he found himself reduced to the utmost misery. He went and knocked at the door of a Capuchin convent, where he was received with generous hospitality. The religious were at this time engaged in the erection of some buildings. Camillus offered himself as a labourer, in the hope of earning a little money to keep above want, and of being able to return to the war in spring. Unfortunately, he had not lost his passion for gaming. It was still so strong that. being in Naples, he played even for his shirt, and

lost it. Yet this was only a passing fault; for he had already made some serious reflections.

One day he felt himself so touched by grace that he asked and obtained permission to remain with these charitable Capuchins; but, the ulcer in his leg having reopened, he was sent away. He returned to Rome, and was again received into the Hospital of the Incurables. This time, Camillus was no longer the same man: he had wholly changed his life. His conduct was a model of regularity, charity, and piety.

It was now that he formed the design of founding an Order for the spiritual and corporal relief of the sick. After many difficulties and contradictions, he obtained the approbation of the Holy Father. Camillus, seeing his Order established, resigned out of humility the office of superior. Free from all temporal cares, he had no longer any thought but of walking in the way of perfection. To deplore the time which he had lost, to attend day and night on the sick in the great Hospital of the Holy Ghost, and to lay up stores of merits for eternity, were his only occupations during the last seven years of his life. Full of good works, and of confidence in Him who said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,"[1] he died in Rome on the 14th of July, 1614.[2]

Last of all, to leave no misfortune uncared for, Catholic Charity, like the sun, whose rays carry light and heat everywhere, founded at the same time a Religious Order destined to supply the necessary resources for the redemption of captives, and to support by its prayers the generous liberators who used to pass annually into the countries of the infidels, to treat about the ransom of Christians. This Order was that of the *Nuns of Mercy*, established at Seville in 1568. After pronouncing the three ordinary vows of religion, they add: "I promise, as far as my state will permit, to attend to those things which relate to the redemption of captives, and, if necessary, to give my life for them."[3]

Prayer.

O my God! I thank Thee for having established so many Religious Orders for the relief of our spiritual and corporal miseries. Grant me a great devotion towards the Blessed Eucharist, the source of Catholic charity.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will visit the poor, especially when they are sick.*

[1] *Matt.*, v, 7.
[2] Hélyot, t. IV, p. 263; Godes., 14th July; his life in Italian, 8vo.
[3] Hélyot, t. III, p. 296.

LESSON L.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.)

Picture of the Seventeenth Century. Judgment of God on the Heretical Nations. The Church defended: St. Francis de Sales—Order of the Visitation. The Church propagated: Missions of Paraguay; other Missions. The Church consoled: St. Vincent de Paul—Sisters of Charity.

CHILDREN of the Catholic Church! here we are, arrived at the seventeenth century of its miraculous foundation. To relate its history for you, we have had seventeen times to sound the trumpet of war, and to begin each of our lessons with a new battle. Could it be otherwise? Is it not divinely written that the unchangeable truth and sanctity of your august mother would expose her to the endless persecutions of error and vice?[1] Is it not by her crown of thorns that all ages are to recognise the lawful Spouse of the God of Calvary? Far then from letting this long conflict of the Church afflict you, it ought on the contrary to confirm your faith. It ought above all to make your heart beat with gratitude and love; for it is on account of keeping intact the patrimony of your Father that your Mother is the object of so many attacks.

If on any day the Church, a faithless guardian, had entered into an alliance with error or vice, hell would have laid down its arms. A shameful peace, the peace of the sects, would have been the ignoble reward of her prevarication. But fear not! You have seen that for sixteen centuries she has justly sung the canticle of her glorious fidelity. She will sing it during the three centuries whose history will lead us to our own epoch, and, when we are no more, she will continue to sing it to the generations coming after us: a solemn canticle, which no other society has a right to sing, and which will resound through the Heavenly Jerusalem during an endless eternity: *Often have my enemies attacked me from my youth; often have they attacked me, but they could not prevail against me. They have struck on my back as on an anvil, they have lengthened their iniquities; but the Lord, in His justice, hath broken the heads of sinners.*[2]

This glorious destiny of your Mother is also a great lesson for you. War also, continual war, is your element, is a strict condition of your existence on earth. Courage, patience, confidence in God, and fidelity to grace, have secured the triumph of the Church. Have recourse to the same arms, and victory will be yours—that

[1] *Marc.*, xiii, 13. [2] *Psal.* cxxviii.

victory whose reward is an immortal crown. Profit by these useful reflections, and let us descend again into the arena. The combatants await us there.

During the seventeenth century, hell continues the terrible battle begun in the previous century. Pagan arts, pagan polity, pagan theatres, a deluge of immodest pictures and statues, fill minds and hearts with corruption. A crowd of sects, daughters of the Renaissance and of Protestantism, come one after another to attack the Church, and to be broken in pieces against this immovable rock. Great disasters, the just punishments of schism, heresy, and scandal, befall guilty humanity, and make it feel a little of that pagan misery and slavery from which Christianity delivered it.

Against all the efforts of hell to destroy the work of redemption, God opposes the Church, but the Church fortified, defended by great Doctors and great Saints; the Church become the mother of a hundred and ten Religious Orders or Congregations; the Church shining with a vigour altogether new, and extending her conquests throughout the four quarters of the world.

Germany, England, Switzerland, and even a part of France, had lost the Faith. Like so many others, these peoples had dared to say to the Lamb that rules the world, "We will not have Thee reign over us;" and, like so many others, they received the just punishment of their revolt. Read their history, and tell us whether you know anything to be compared with the evils that they experienced at this time. Rivers of blood covered Germany for more than thirty years. For half a century England walked by the glare of piles kindled and fed by civil war: from revolution to revolution she went on to the foot of a scaffold, on which rolled the head of a king. Switzerland drank the blood of a hundred thousand of her citizens. France herself was punished for the part that she had taken in the rebellion against Jesus Christ, by unparalleled atrocities, by the destruction of a great many of her most beautiful monuments, and by the pillage of several of her provinces.[1]

The hand of God ceased, however, to weigh heavy on the Most Christian Kingdom. In some of her members, France became again, in the seventeenth century, a powerful auxiliary to the Faith. The Eldest Daughter of the Church, she showed herself ready to combat error, to send out missionaries to infidel nations, and to assist the zeal of those who were labouring for the conversion of heretics. One of her glories at this period was to second with all her might the efforts of the holy Apostle of Chablais,

[1] See *Le Secret des Finances*, already mentioned.

Francis de Sales: no other people treated him with so much esteem and veneration.

This great Saint, so manifestly sent by heaven to fight against heresy, and to revive true piety in the world, was born in Savoy, at the castle of Sales, on the 25th of August, 1567. His father and mother were descended from the most ancient houses of the country. The young child loved God as soon as he was capable of knowing Him. His first use of speech was to say, "God and Mamma love me much." Meekness, docility, modesty, a wonderful sprightliness, and above all a tender love for the poor: such were the qualities and virtues that distinguished him from other children of his age. He would often petition his parents on behalf of the poor, and, as far as he could, deprive himself of a part of his own food in order to relieve them.

When of age, he was placed in the college of Annecy, where he made all the progress that could be desired. Some years afterwards he was sent to Paris, under the care of a virtuous guardian. To th study of human science, the young Francis joined the much more important study of the science of the Saints. To avoid bad company, he used to go out only to the church and the schools: just what SS. Gregory and Basil used to do in Athens. People said of them that they knew only two streets, that to the church and that to the schools. An admirable lesson for young men, and a still more admirable one for young women!

It was in a church of Paris, named of St. Stephen des Grès, that Francis de Sales, prostrate before an image of the Blessed Virgin, made a vow of virginity. The Lord blessed this sublime act; and, to purify still more a heart already so pure, placed it in the crucible of temptation. At the suggestion of the evil spirit, Francis took it into his head that he was a reprobate. This thought brought him to such a state of sickness that fears were entertained for his life: but God never permits His servants to be tempted above their strength. Francis went and cast himself at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, and his good Mother restored peace to his heart.[1] This first victory was a pledge of those which he won later on, as well at Paris as in Italy, over the enemy of our salvation.

His studies ended, he returned to the paternal roof. There was a desire to engage him in the world, and to make him contract an honourable marriage. Francis answered that he had chosen the Lord for his portion; and, in spite of the tears and entreaties of his

[1] The statue before which he prayed is at present in the chapel of the Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova, Paris.

father, received Holy Orders. The Bishop of Geneva sent him as a missionary to Chablais and other districts infected with heresy, where he ran very great risks. He there endured hunger, cold, contempt, wrongs, but with a patience so angelic that, after two years of toil, his example and discourses brought back to the Faith more than sixty thousand heretics. This bright light was then placed on a candlestick to illumine with its pure rays the whole Church: Francis became Bishop of Geneva.

Never had there been seen a more amiable Saint, or one endowed with greater meekness. Though of a quick temper, he never let the least emotion thereof appear. One day when he was exceedingly warm, his servant, to try his patience, lighted a large fire in his room. The Saint entered, and was content to say with a smile, "A fire is good at all seasons!" He recommended nothing so much as meekness, simplicity, and confidence in God. His works breathe all his virtues: it is impossible to find better books of piety. Francis, worn out with labours, died in Lyons on the 28th of December, 1622, aged fifty-six years.

In concert with St. Jane Francis de Chantal, he founded the Order of the Visitation, intended to serve as a retreat for infirm girls and women. This is the reason why its constitutions do not bind to any great austerities. It also receives persons who enjoy good health. The Nuns make the three ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In this Order is perpetuated the sweet and charitable piety of the holy founder: no more beautiful school of those simple, sanctifying virtues which are the essence of Christianity! The Sisters of the Visitation also occupy themselves very successfully in the education of youth.

Their habit is black, and as simple as possible. They wear a silver cross on their breast, to remind them of the love of God, and of an absolute conformity to His divine will, after the example of Our Lord, who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. After dinner, all the Nuns appear before the superioress, that they may ask her orders, and do nothing but through obedience. In the evening, after supper, they present themselves a second time, to receive new orders till after dinner next day. That poverty may be more exactly observed among them, they must every year change their rooms, beds, crosses, beads, images, and other such things.

It would be difficult to form a just idea of the peace and contentment that reign in these happy homes of innocence. If Paradise were to be found on earth, it would be found here.

The Order of the Visitation spread with great rapidity: it numbered many persons distinguished by their birth and their piety.

Among others, the Duchess of Montmorency, who died at Moulins; the mother of Brechard, who was one of the first companions of St. Chantal; and the blessed Mary Alacoque, to whom Our Lord revealed the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The altar at the foot of which this last Nun was at prayer when Our Lord made the revelation to her, is at present in Nevers, as well as the heart of St. Chantal.

While St. Francis de Sales was making piety flourish again, and preparing abundant consolations for the Church, zealous Missionaries were, after the example of St. Francis Xavier, leaving home and kindred, to go into barbarous lands, and make among savages new conquests for Jesus Christ. It would require volumes to relate the noble deeds of these heroes of the Faith in the course of the seventeenth century. It will be enough for us to say something of the services that they rendered to poor infidels. We shall see hereby that Catholic Missionaries have been the truest benefactors of humanity, and that God never ceases to give some marks of His paternal bounty even to peoples who have not the happiness of knowing Him.

When the Spaniards discovered America, they saw that the country was exceedingly rich in gold mines. Their cupidity was roused: every means of obtaining this precious metal seemed good to them. They went so far as to disembowel the unfortunate Indians, that they might search for it in their entrails. The Catholic Missionaries alone opposed these cruelties resolutely. By dint of entreaties, they softened a little the barbarity of the Spaniards; but, alas! the insatiable greed of the conquerors always found a thousand ways to torture the conquered. Far from being disheartened, the untiring religious set in motion all the resources of the most apostolic zeal, and obtained from the Kings of Spain authority to form independent colonies of all the savages whom they could gather together and convert to religion. Their petitions were heard, and their efforts were crowned with success.

But let us tell how they undertook the founding of these establishments, which brought back the beautiful days of the Early Church. The Missionaries dispersed themselves through the woods. The old histories represent them to us with a breviary under the left arm and a large cross in the right hand, and without any other provisions than their confidence in God. They paint them to us clearing their way through forests, wading through marshes where the water is up to their cincture, climbing steep rocks, and ferreting through caves and along precipices, at the risk of meeting with serpents and wild beasts instead of the men whom they are seeking. Many of them died of hunger and fatigue. Others were killed and devoured by the savages.

Sometimes the savages would stand round the unknown Priest who spoke to them of God, and look up to that Heaven which he showed them. Again they would run from him as from an enchanter, and seem struck with a strange fear. The Father would follow them, holding out his hands in the name of Jesus Christ. If he could not stop them, he would plant his cross in some open place, and go and hide in the woods. The savages would draw near little by little to examine the standard of peace raised in the solitude. Then the Missionary, coming out suddenly from his ambuscade and profiting of the surprise of the barbarians, would invite them to quit a wretched life and enjoy the sweets of society.

When the Missionaries had tamed some of the savages, they formed little villages: as many as thirty of them were to be counted in a few years. Each village was governed by two Missionaries, who directed the temporal and spiritual affairs of the little republic. Labour began and ended with the sound of the bell. This was to be heard at the dawn of day. The children would immediately assemble in the church, where their morning concert, like that of little birds, continued till sunrise. The men and women would afterwards assist at Mass, from which they went off to their work. At the close of the day, the bell would summon the new citizens again to the altar, and evening prayers were sung in two choirs and with beautiful music.

The land was divided into lots, and every family cultivated one of these lots for its wants. There was, moreover, a public field called *God's Possession*. The produce of the common field was intended to supply for bad harvests, and to maintain widows, orphans, and sick people. In the middle of the village was the public square, formed by the church, the house of the Fathers, the arsenal, the common granary, the house of refuge, and the hospice for strangers.

With a government so paternal, it is not surprising that the new Christians were the purest and happiest of mankind. The change in their morals was a miracle wrought before the face of the world. That spirit of cruelty and revenge, and that abandonment to the grossest vices, which characterised the Indian hordes, were transformed into a love of meekness, patience, and chastity. We may judge of their virtues from the simple words of the Bishop of Buenos Ayres. "Sire," he wrote to Philip V., "among these numerous tribes of Indians, naturally inclined to all sorts of vices, there reigns such a wonderful innocence that I do not think they ever commit a single mortal sin."

It seems to us that a desire springs up on reading this history, namely, to cross the ocean, and, far away from troubles and revo-

lutions, to seek an obscure life in the cabins of these savages and a quiet grave under the palm-trees of their cemeteries. But neither deserts nor seas are vast enough to hide man from the sorrows that pursue him. The missions of Paraguay are destroyed. The thousands of savages, brought together with so much toil, are wandering again in the woods or buried alive in the bowels of the earth. See, on one side, what Christianity has done; and on the other, what the malice of man has done.

However, Religion is not extinguished in America: it has, on the contrary, made numerous conquests. At the present day, it counts more than twenty-four millions of Catholics.

While the Missionaries of whom we have just been speaking were civilising the savages of the New World, other Apostles, no less zealous, were carrying the light of Faith to the peoples of the East. Tartary, Persia, Egypt, China, Tonquin, beheld the arrival of these new conquerors, and received their words. Not a part of the world that could escape their zeal, or their desire to save souls! Who else ever attempted what they accomplished? Moved with pity for so many unbelievers seated in the shadow of death, they felt themselves urged on with a desire to give their lives for those souls redeemed at the price of a divine blood. It was necessary to struggle through immense forests and marshes, to cross dangerous rivers, to climb slippery rocks; it was necessary to face cruel, jealous, and superstitious nations; it was necessary to overcome the ignorance of barbarity in some and the prejudices of civilisation in others: yet so many obstacles could not deter them!

Who can speak in worthy terms of the greatness of their sacrifice? If a man, in the sight of a whole people, before the eyes of his relatives and friends, exposes himself to death for his country, he exchanges a few days of life for centuries of glory: he surrounds his family with lustre, and raises it to wealth and honour. But the Missionary, whose life is spent in the depth of woods; who dies a frightful death, without spectators, without applause, without benefit to his connexions; an obscure man, despised, treated as a fool or a fanatic, and all this to give eternal happiness to an unknown savage: what is to be said of him?—what name is to be given to his sacrifice? Various religious bodies used to devote themselves to the missions: the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Lazarists, and the Priests of the Foreign Missions. All these Missionaries had a wonderful instinct for tracing out the unfortunate, and, so to speak, compelling them to yield, even in their last covert.[1]

[1] Chateaubriand. *Génie*, t. IX, p. 35, 49.

While most of the Missionaries of America were running through woods in search of savages, one of their brethren, Father Claver, gave himself up to the instruction of the negroes. If we would measure the extent of his charity, we must know that the negroes are the most degraded, despised, and ill-treated portion of the human race. Sons of Cham, the anathema uttered by Noe against Chanaan still weighs heavy on their heads. To this curse must even be attributed the black colour that distinguishes them. Always slaves of their brethren, it happened, after the discovery of America, that some "contractors," unworthy of the name of men and much more so of the name of Christians, used to go and buy them by thousands on the coast of Africa, to sell them again, especially at Carthagena, in South America, where the traders of every nation who lived by this horrid traffic were in the habit of meeting.

There one might see ships continually arriving, in which these wretched captives were stowed away, without beds, without clothes, plunged in filth, and always laden with chains. All this, joined with bad food, brought on them diseases, cancers, ulcers so disgusting that they could not themselves endure their smell. Whence it came to pass that many among them preferred to smother themselves or to die of hunger rather than lead so miserable a life. What was most lamentable was that still less care was taken of their souls than of their bodies. The great object was to grow rich by buying and selling them, and in most of those who carried on this commerce the thirst for gold had stifled every other sentiment.[1]

At the sight of these horrors, Father Claver, a Jesuit Missionary, to whom the Father of all men had given a particular attraction and a most tender regard for the negroes, was filled with compassion, and formed the design of consecrating himself wholly to their service. When making his solemn religious profession, he added to the ordinary vows that of serving the negroes, and signed his name, "Peter Claver, slave of the negroes for ever." Never was a vow better kept.

When a vessel laden with negroes came into port, the good Missionary ran to it, after providing himself with brandy, biscuits, fruits, jams even, and several choice kinds of meat, to make a feast for the new arrivals, and to cheer them as a mother would her children. His kind and affable ways, his touching words, the warm affection that he showed for these poor people, telling them that he would always be a defender, a protector, and a father to them,

[1] So often condemned by the Church, the slave-trade is now abolished, at least ostensibly, or nearly so, among the Christian nations of Europe.

attached them to him from the very first. He succeeded in winning them altogether by distributing among them the little refreshments that he had brought with him. Hence, he used to say that it was necessary in the first place to speak to them by the hand.

Virtuous souls helped him, and sent him all the articles needed. After securing the confidence of the negroes, he endeavoured to gain themselves to God. He first inquired about all the children born during the voyage, in order to confer Baptism on them. He then visited for the same purpose all the adults dangerously ill. He would himself dress their sores, lift food to their mouths, embrace them tenderly, before his departure, no matter how repulsive their appearance, and leave them so much the more delighted with his charitable welcome as they were the more neglected.

On the day of general disembarkment, he would return with some old negroes of the same country as the newly arrived. He would give them his hand to help them down to the shore. He would take the sick in his arms, and convey them away on cars that he had ready. There was not one to whom he did not show some special marks of benevolence. He would not leave them till he had seen them to the place of their destination; and, when they were settled down, he would go again to visit them one after another, recommend them earnestly to their masters, and promise to return again soon, without ever forgetting them.

But as the object of his corporal charities was the salvation of their souls, behold what he did to gather the fruit thereof. After arranging with his interpreters about the most convenient time for instruction, he would set out at a precise moment, having in his hand a staff with a cross at the top of it, a crucifix on his breast, and on his shoulder a bag containing a surplice, a stole, several images, and everything necessary to relieve the sick. As soon as he arrived, he would enter with a cheerful countenance into their huts, which were like so many damp stables, wherein their numbers obliged them to lie together any way, with no other bed than the ground.

The bad air which, particularly in a warm country, rises from so many sickly bodies, makes such an abode intolerable. Few Europeans could spend an hour there without fainting; but Father Claver delighted in the place Attentive only to the value of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, he raised a kind of altar there, on which he put up several affecting pictures—for example, the Crucifixion, Hell, and Heaven—in order to give those gross minds some idea of our mysteries.

That the negroes might be able to listen to the instruction with ease, he went in search of forms, planks, and mats; and he did all

this with such a contented and affectionate look, that these poor slaves did not know how to express their gratitude. One would have said that he was there only to serve them, that he was the slave of the slaves themselves. Hence, though many of these negroes had a certain wildness or dogged stupidity that made them well nigh intractable, there were none who did not at length yield to the earnestness and perseverance of their holy pastor. He did not think it enough to make them Christians in name and profession: he would see them true Christians, people exact in discharging all the duties of Christianity. By a prodigy which grace alone could work, he formed, after many cares and toils among this degraded and almost brutalised portion of the human race, models of virtue which would confound the best-instructed Europeans.

This example may please even our philosophers, who, in these latter days, have shown such an affection for the negroes. But I doubt whether, though they glory so much in having set them free, they would have resolved on showing their tenderness for them in the same way as Father Claver. To emancipate them, there was question only of making a decree,[1] and sacrificing the interests of owners; to relieve, console, instruct, and enlighten them, it was necessary to sacrifice oneself, to condemn oneself to a most laborious and painful life. Now, we know that humanity inspired by philosophy does not go to such a high degree of heroism.

From the regions where the sun sets, let us pass to those where he rises: Catholic charity promises us new miracles here. The Missionaries of the Levant used to shut themselves up in loathsome galleys and prisons for the sake of comforting Christian slaves. Would you judge of their devotedness? Hear the account of one of them[2]:—

"The services that we render to these poor people, Christian slaves, in the prison of Constantinople, consist in keeping them in the fear of God and in the Faith, in procuring various kinds of relief for them from the charity of the Faithful, in attending them when sick, and lastly in helping them to die well. If all this requires much subjection and pain, I can assure you that God attaches great consolations to it as a reward. In times of plague, as it is necessary to be at hand to succour those who are struck therewith and we have only four or five missionaries, our custom is that one Father alone should enter the prison and remain there as long as the disease lasts. He who obtains permission from the superior to do so prepares himself in retreat for a few days, and

[1] Decree of the Constituent Assembly, which brought about the massacre of San Domingo.

[2] Le P. Tarillon

takes leave of his brethren as if he were soon to die. Sometimes he consummates his sacrifice, and sometimes he escapes the danger."[1]

Let us hear another Missionary :—

"I am now above all those fears which contagious diseases excite, and, please God, I shall not die of one of them after the risks that I have just run. I am leaving the prison, where I have given the Sacraments to eighty-six persons. In the daytime, I was not, it seems to me, surprised at anything. It was only at night, during the little sleep that I could take, that my mind was filled with the most terrible ideas. The greatest danger that I have run— perhaps I shall never run a greater again—was in the hold of a *Sultana* of 82 guns.

"The slaves, together with the guards, brought me down there in the evening to confess them all the night, and to say Mass in the morning. We were secured with double locks, as is the custom. Of fifty-two slaves whose confessions I heard, there were twelve sick, and three died before I left. You may judge what air I had to breathe in this confined place, without the least opening. God, who, out of His goodness, saved me in this strait, will save me in many others."[2]

In the Indies, the Missionaries had to contend with the grossest and most shameful superstitions. In China, they became scholars to gain a nation puffed up with an idea of its knowledge. Elsewhere, they became artizans. Their charity took every form, tried every means imaginable. In a word, they became all to all in order to gain souls to Jesus Christ, and this admirable zeal has never ceased to have imitators.

Every year beholds the departure from the various ports of Europe of men who, in the flower of their age, bid an everlasting farewell to the world, to home and kindred, that they may go and sacrifice in unknown lands their lives for the conversion of infidels. Hunger, thirst, persecutions, privations of every kind, will henceforth make up the record of their existence. As for death, it awaits them in a dungeon, or at a stake, or on a scaffold. How then can it be doubted that the Christian Religion is all love, since it inspires its children with such charity? How can it be doubted that God loves men, since He does so much to save them? How can it be doubted that the Providence of God watches over the Church, since most of those missions, which have converted and still convert innumerable souls, were begun at the very moment when the

[1] *Lett. édif.*, t. I, p. 19, 21.
[2] *Lett. édif.*, t. I, p. 23; Chateaubriand, t. IV, p. 14, 15.

Beloved Spouse of the Man-God was bewailing the apostasy of many of her children in Europe?

Here comes a new proof of the infinite care with which God watches over His work: we mean St. Vincent de Paul. Oh! the beautiful present of Heaven to earth! Not a virtue that this great Saint did not set an example of, not a misery that he did not succour! Justly may he be called a benefactor of mankind: like Our Lord, he went about doing good! God raised him up to relieve human sufferings, and to revive faith and charity, almost extinct amid the wars and heresies that were desolating Europe.

St. Vincent de Paul was born in Poy, a village in the diocese of Acqs, Gascony, in the year 1576. His father and mother were poor: they had six children, whom they brought up in piety, and in the labours of a country life. Vincent's first years were spent in keeping his father's flocks. He had a serious manner, and such a love for the poor that he used to deprive himself of necessaries in order to assist them. His father, who remarked several rare qualities in him, resolved on putting him to study, and placed him as a boarder with the Cordeliers. At the end of a few years, Vincent was able to teach others. When twenty years old, he removed to Toulouse, where he went through his course of theology. He soon afterwards became Sub-deacon, Deacon, and Priest.

Five years later on, he made a journey to Marseilles. Having got on board to return to his own country, the vessel was taken by pirates, and Vincent was led captive to Tunis. He was sold to a fisherman; and then to an old physician, who did everything possible to make him renounce his religion. Vincent's third master was a renegade. The Saint converted him, and they returned to Europe. Free from the slavery of men, Vincent could think only of setting souls free from the slavery of the devil. He consecrated himself specially to the service of the poor, and began with the inhabitants of the country, on whom he lavished all the spiritual and temporal cares in his power. He next occupied himself with the galley-slaves, to whom he rendered so many services that the king appointed him Chaplain-General of the galleys of France.

In this character Vincent went to Marseilles, and did not make himself known, the better to learn the true state of affairs. Exceedingly touched at the despair of a convict whom he strove in vain to console, we are assured that, by an unheard-of heroism of charity, he obtained leave to take his place, that he was laden with the same chains and carried them for some time. During his abode here, he provided for the sick galley-slaves a general hospital, which, thanks to his care, soon became one of the best kept in the kingdom.

His missions in the country had inspired some ecclesiastics with a desire to join him: this was the beginning of the Community of St. Lazarus. Founded by St. Vincent de Paul, the Lazarists direct seminaries, give spiritual exercises to candidates for ordination, and undertake missions as well in country districts as among infidels.

Vincent's zeal was not satisfied. He established "Associations of Charity" for the relief of the poor in every parish; "Ladies of the Cross" for the education of little girls; and "Ladies" for the service of the sick in large hospitals. Paris owes to him the foundation of the hospitals of Pity, Bicetre, Saltpetre, and the Foundlings.

In those times many children were every night laid at the doors of churches, or on the pavements of the public squares: numbers of them perished. Vincent, deeply touched at their sad fate, sought out a remedy for so great an evil. He mentioned the matter to some charitable ladies, who supplied him with means to support them; but the resources soon failed. The Ladies of Charity were assembled to deliberate whether the good work should be continued.

Vincent felt all the bowels of his compassion moved, and, opening his lips, addressed the noble assembly in these eloquent terms: "Ladies! pity and charity made you adopt these little creatures as your children. You became their mothers according to grace, since their mothers according to nature had abandoned them. Cease now to be their mothers that you may become their judges: their life and death are in your hands. I will take the votes." The assembly could reply only with tears. It was decided that the good work should be continued, the king promised his help, and thus it came to pass that every year more than ten thousand children in the city of Paris alone owed their preservation to St. Vincent.

To procure for his children the most tender care, and for the sick the most thoughtful attendance, Vincent founded a Congregation of Sisters of Charity: it is now called the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul.[1] He gave birth to a multitude of other establishments of the same kind, not only in France, but throughout the whole Christian world, so that we may say that the sick of every clime are indebted to St. Vincent for the wonderful care lavished on them by Nuns in hospitals.

There is no person who, seeing them, not only cleaning the

[1] Bergier, t. X.—The Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul, whose mother house is in Paris, numbers at present about 20,000 Sisters of all countries and ranks. Several times each year, flocks of these peaceful doves may be seen leaving this house, to alight at all points of the globe from China to Chili, and from Chili to Constantinople: a living miracle, which alone proves better than all the books ever written the divinity of Catholicity!

sick and making their beds, but even washing their linen, does not look on them as so many holy victims, who, out of an excess of love and charity in relieving the neighbour, run of their own will to death, which they meet, so to speak, in the midst of the infection caused by so many diseases.[1]

And to devote themselves to the service of the sick whom they do not know, from whom they have nothing to expect, how many sacrifices must be made by these heroines of charity? The abandonment of the pleasures of life, the fading of youth, the renouncing of a family, all the sacrifices of the heart, all the sentiments of the soul stifled, except pity, which, amid so many sorrows, becomes one torture more![2]

And who then would not feel his heart touched, his soul transported with admiration, on beholding the devotedness of these Hospital Nuns, so well named "Sisters of Charity" or "Daughters of God," when Voltaire himself could not refuse them the tribute of his homage? "Perhaps there is nothing grander on earth," he says, "than the sacrifice which the delicate sex makes of beauty, youth, and high birth, to relieve in hospitals that mass of human miseries the sight of which is so humiliating to our pride and so revolting to our delicacy. The peoples separated from the Roman Communion have only *imperfectly imitated* so generous a charity."[3]

We are surprised that one man, without wealth, should have been able to do so many things, but we are still more surprised when we learn that for several years he fed whole provinces made desolate by the plague and by war: the amount of alms that he obtained on this occasion was incredible.

Meanwhile the health of Vincent, undermined by so many labours, sank visibly. He was seized, at the age of nearly eighty years, with a fever, which quite exhausted him. On the return of one of its attacks, he used to say with admirable resignation, "Cheer up, my sister fever! you are welcome, since you come from God." And this sister who kept him company so long did not prevent him from rising every day at four o'clock in the morning, and finding leisure for all his exercises of piety and charity. At length a holy death crowned this life of good works on the 27th of September, 1660.[4] He was deeply lamented by all: the wicked themselves could not help praising his virtues.[5]

[1] Hélyot, cited by Chateaubriand, t. IV, p. 123.

[2] Chateaubriand, t. IV, p. 123.

[3] *Imperfectly imitated!* They have not imitated it at all: the first Protestant Nun is yet to be seen.

[4] Godescard, July 19.

[5] For particulars regarding the foundation of the *Society of St. Vincent de Paul*, now doing so much good wherever it is established, see the Life of Frederick Ozanam, by Kathleen O'Meara. (*Tr.*)

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having raised up so many Missionaries to preach the Gospel to all the peoples of the earth. Grant us the grace to deserve by our truly Christian conduct the preservation of the Faith among us.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will bear sickness patiently.*

LESSON LI.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church attacked in Japan: Violent Persecution. The Church defended: Martyrs; their Joy and Constancy. The Church consoled: Progress of the Faith in China and America. The Church attacked: Jansenism. The Church defended: Bossuet, Fenelon. The Church consoled: Trappists; Order of Our Lady of Refuge; the Venerable Mother Elizabeth of Jesus; Order of the Perpetual Adoration; Congregation of the Hospital Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova; Sisters of Charity of Nevers.

The Church, which proved her sanctity in the West by the eloquent virtues of St. Vincent de Paul, sealed her Faith in the East with the blood of her Martyrs. In no century has martyrdom, that is to say, the testimony of blood, been wanting to the Catholic Religion: this is a fact too little considered.

St. Francis Xavier, who arrived in Japan in 1549, found this large kingdom plunged in the thickest darkness of idolatry. But this apostolic man, whom God had raised up in His mercy, preached the Gospel there with such success that whole provinces were converted. The fruit of his labours was as lasting as it was wonderful, since, in 1582, the kings of Arima, Bungo, and Omura sent a solemn embassy to Pope Gregory XIII. Five years afterwards, Japan numbered two hundred thousand Christians, among whom were bonzes—that is, priests of the country—princes, and kings. Unfortunately the progress of Christianity, which daily made new strides, was checked, in 1588, by the circumstances of which we are now about to speak.

The Emperor Cambacundono, who, through a sacrilegious pride, made people offer him divine honours, commanded all the Jesuit Missionaries to quit his dominions before the expiration of six months. Many of them did not go in spite of the command; but

they disguised themselves, so that they might more freely exercise their holy functions. The persecution having been rekindled in 1592, a great many Japanese converts received the crown of martyrdom. The Emperor Taicosama, a man as corrupt as he was proud, raised a still more violent persecution. He crucified nine Missionaries on a hill near the town of Nagasaki. A number of Japanese suffered also with them, including three little boys who used to serve Mass for the Priests. The two elder ones were fifteen years of age, the youngest was only twelve; but their youth did not prevent them from bearing their tortures with courage, and even with joy. All the other known Missionaries were shipped off, that they might no longer preach the Christian Religion in Japan. However, there were twenty-eight Priests who still remained in the country, but disguised.

Taicosama being dead, the Missionaries reappeared. They converted forty thousand souls in 1593, and more than thirty thousand in the year following, though they themselves were not more than a hundred. They built fifty churches, in which the Faithful used to assemble; but that peace which had so marvellously facilitated the progress of the Gospel was disturbed, in 1602, by Cubosama. This prince renewed the edicts that had formerly been issued against the Christians. The persecution grew horrible in 1614, and lasted for long years. Then were to be seen renewed all those beautiful examples of piety, charity, and courage which we meet with in the history of the Primitive Church. Let us cite a few facts.

The King of Tango had a very young wife, whom he kept continually shut up in his palace, where she lived in great innocence. Though he was an idolator, he had often spoken to her of the Christian Religion, which used to excite the admiration even of those who did not embrace it. This princess, who had an excellent mind, retained all that he said to her; and, her morals placing no obstacle to the impressions of grace, she felt strongly inclined towards a religion so conformable to her tastes. As she had no hope of obtaining the consent of her husband the king, it was necessary to keep the affair of her conversion a deep secret, and to hide her doings from a host of officials ever on the alert.

Happily there had been brought up near her a princess of the royal house, to whom she was more closely bound by a similarity of virtuous dispositions than by affinity, and to whom she could freely open her heart. She told everything to this safe friend, who was at full liberty to go in and out, and sent her to acquaint a Missionary with her desires and difficulties. The young princess, who was as eager as the queen to embrace Christianity, did not

confine herself to her mission: she got herself baptised, and received the name of Mary.

The grace of Baptism immediately changed her into an apostle. All the ladies of the palace, whom she informed of her happiness, went in succession to the Missionary, and became Christians: a gentleman who followed them came back like them. Meanwhile the queen was bewailing her sad fate, so much the more bitterly as she saw herself a slave of hell in the midst of a court for whom she had procured the holy liberty of the Children of God. The princess Mary went again to the Missionary: she learned perfectly the manner of conferring Baptism, returned, and baptised the queen, making her take the name of Grace, a name which was never more justly borne.

All this occurred in the absence of the king. On his return, he seemed exceedingly angry at it, and declared positively to the queen as well as to the whole court that it was necessary to abjure forthwith a religion hateful to the emperor and likely to ruin himself. Threats and arguments proving useless, there was no kind of ill-treatment that he did not employ. The queen was even less spared than the others: the king's resentment was in proportion to the passionate love that he bore her. To all his excesses of rage and indignation, she opposed nothing but an immovable patience and meekness. One of the king's children falling dangerously ill, she engaged the princess Mary to baptise it, and no sooner had it received Baptism than it perfectly recovered. The arms at once fell from the king's hands: he resolved to dissemble, and was no longer offended with persons whom he could not help loving and revering.

The queen, finding herself a little freer, made use of her liberty to practise all the good works that her position permitted, and to set an example of every Christian virtue. Far from idolising her figure, it seemed as if she had undertaken to tarnish its beauty with all the austerities of penance. She learned Latin and Portuguese very well, less to train her mind than to enlighten it more and more with the knowledge which she would derive from books of piety. But her greatest delight was to bring together orphans and poor children, to care for them herself, to instruct them in the elements of our religion, and to make them true Christians.

For twelve years she had been leading this holy life, when a revolution occurred, in which she became the sad victim of her royal husband's jealousy. Though this prince had never entertained the least suspicion of her fidelity, he was afraid that she might yet be the object of some other love than his. This was the reason why he left her in the city of Osaca, which was well fortified,

and seemed capable of resisting the attacks of the enemy. However, as he was not fully confident, he ordered the steward of his house, in case the place should be taken, to behead the queen, and to set fire to the palace. Osaca was actually taken, and the steward was summoned to surrender the queen into the hands of the conqueror.

This officer, full of veneration for his sovereign, tried but in vain every means possible to save her. At last he went to her, despair pictured on his features, fell at her feet, which he watered with his tears, and informed her of the barbarous command that he had received. We ourselves shall perish immediately, he adds, and my whole consolation is not to survive a princess whose death would make my own life the most intolerable of torments. The queen listens to his words as if they did not concern her. You know, she says, that I am a Christian, and that death does not frighten Christians; as for yourself, think well on what is going to become of you for eternity.

After these few words, she went to her oratory, and there, prostrate before the image of a God dead for us, offered up the sacrifice of her life. She then quickly assembled the ladies of her suite, who were all Christians, embraced them tenderly, and represented to them that, not having been themselves condemned to die, the law of God obliged them to withdraw before the palace was set on fire. All broke out into pitiable sobs and cries. She alone, as calm as if the affair was of little importance, returned to her oratory, called the steward, and told him that he might fulfil his commission. He fell again at her feet, and besought her to forgive him for her death. The queen placed herself on her knees, turned back the collar of her dress, and, pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, received the stroke that cut off her head, and showed by her firmness that Christian strength had in a manner raised her above all the shackles of matter, the frailties of her sex, and the repugnances of nature.

Meanwhile, persecution served only to show how deeply rooted was the Faith in the hearts of the Japanese. The emperor having ordered that lists should be drawn up of all the Christians who frequented the churches of Osaca and Meaco, a rumour immediately spread through the provinces that everyone refusing to adore his gods would be put to death. This news, which seemed likely only to excite fear, made the Faith shine so brightly and kindled such an ardent desire for martyrdom that the idolators were amazed.

The king of Bungo, whose conversion had been the joy of the Church, seeing himself overwhelmed with afflictions, pronounced these beautiful words: "I swear in Thy presence, O almighty God!

that, though all the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, by whose ministry Thou hast called me to Christianity, should themselves renounce what they taught me, and though I should be assured that all the Christians of Europe had denied Thy name, I would confess, recognise, and adore Thee, even if it cost me my life, as I now confess, recognise, and adore Thee, the only true and almighty God of the universe."

Ucondono, commander-in-chief of the army and one of the most fervent Christians in Japan, became most anxious to associate himself with the Missionaries in the hope that he should not fail to be arrested and to share their chains and punishments. He was imitated by two sons of the master of the emperor's household, of whom the elder, already appointed successor to his father, travelled six hundred miles to Meaco, and dressed himself like the Missionaries that he might be the sooner arrested. All his people, whom he wished to see discharged, protested that they would die with him. His younger brother, who was found at home, had to contend with all the tenderness of relatives and even the threats of his father, who was a pagan; but he showed such courage that they soon lespaired of making any impression on him.

A prince, related to the emperor and possessed of three kingdoms, went and shut himself up with the Jesuits, that he might die with them.

Another prince, lately baptised, announced to his people that he would severely punish all those who, questioned if their prince was a Christian, should conceal the truth.

One of the most powerful nobles in the country and most renowned for his valour, fearing that it would be thought too daring an attempt to seize him at home, went and presented himself with his wife to an officer of the persecution, with no other suite than a son ten years old, whom he led by the hand, and a daughter still too young to walk, whom the mother carried. People even of the lowest conditions appeared intrepidly before the ministers of justice. In a word, all showed themselves anxious not to let pass an opportunity of signing the confession of their Faith with their blood.

Women of quality worked in haste with their attendants to make splendid garments for themselves, that they might honour the day of their death, for which they had no other name than the day of their triumph. They used to meet in particular houses, where they hoped to be recognised. Among those of Meaco, there was one who besought the others to drag her to execution, if they should see her hesitating or afraid.

A young lady was to be seen preparing with admirable coolness for the least details of her sacrifice, and settling her dress so as to

appear according to the rules of the strictest modesty on a cross, which as rumour went was to be the end of all Christians in the land. Her servants, thinking also of their fate, were hastening to be ready, one with her reliquary, another with her beads or crucifix, and all this so calmly and quietly that some soldiers, still subject to the prejudices of their country, where it is regarded as a meanness not to resist violence, threw down at the sight their daggers and scimitars, in order to take up some articles of piety and to let themselves be slaughtered like the women around them.

To show how supernatural was this ardour for martyrdom, let us speak of the examples given by weak women and tender children. A Christian woman, named Thecla, was burned alive with five of her children by her side and one in her womb. Having reached the place of execution, she put on her a new dress as a sign of joy. When on the pile, the smoke of which was slowly suffocating her, she thought only of wiping away the tears of her little daughter, aged three years, whom she held in her arms and encouraged with the hope of that eternal glory which should be hers in a few moments. A poor woman sold her girdle that she might have the means of buying a stake to be bound to and burned alive in testimony of her Faith. Another, having been sentenced to death, hastened to write to her husband, who was at a distance, to come and share her happiness by dying with her.

The generosity of children equalled that of their mothers. A little boy, nine years old, ran himself to the place where the Martyrs were being slaughtered, and laid bare his neck for the edge of the sword. A little girl, eight years old, being unable to go herself to martyrdom, for she was blind, held so fast to her mother that she succeeded in dying on the same pile. Two children, sentenced to death, began to tenderly console their old aunt, whom they supposed to be weeping from grief, while she was weeping from the holy envy that she bore to the Martyrs.

A child of five years was awakened, just when in his deepest sleep, to be led to execution. Without being alarmed, he asked for his holiday clothes, and dressed himself quickly. It was in the arms of the executioner himself that this tender lamb was carried to the block. There he placed himself on his knees, not far from his father, who had just been put to death, stretched out his little hands, raised his eyes to Heaven, and awaited the fatal stroke. The generosity of this little angel touched the executioner: the scimitar fell from his hands. Meanwhile, the young Martyr, who had uncovered himself down to his girdle, remained on his knees in expectation of the death-stroke. Seeing that the chief executioner would not venture to touch him he addressed himself to another. He

obtained the favour which he asked; but it was only at the third stroke that the unskilful executioner succeeded in striking off the head of this amiable child, whose constancy never wavered.

We may imagine what must have been the courage of the Missionaries who could inspire weak children and timid women with such generous sentiments. The oldest and most renowned of these evangelical labourers was Father Charles Spinola, a Jesuit, born in Italy, of an illustrious family. He was taken with a great many Christians, and condemned to be burned. The sentence was to be executed on a hill near Nagasaki, only five hundred paces distant from that on which, twenty-five years before, the twenty-six Martyrs canonised by Urban VIII. had been crucified. The whole troop set out for the place of execution. Numerous bodies of guards were stationed here and there to restrain the multitude, for it is said that there were present on the occasion at least thirty thousand Christians, besides idolators.

Having reached the hill, the Martyrs who were to be burned were fastened to their stakes. Father Spinola, who was the first to be bound, addressed a few words to the Christians. Then, noticing a fervent neophyte named Isabella Fernandez, he recollected that, on the eve of the day of his being taken, he had baptised a child of which this woman was a short time previously delivered. He had called it Ignatius, because it was born on the festival of the holy founder of the Society of Jesus: this was now four years ago.

The child and mother were present, awaiting the stroke of death. But the child was behind its mother, and the holy man did not see it. He was afraid that it had been hidden, to save it from execution. Where is my son Ignatius? he cried out, addressing Isabella; what have you done with him? He is here, answered the mother, holding him up in her arms; I am taking care not to deprive him of the only happiness that I can procure for him. Then she said to the child, My son, here is your father; beg him to bless you. Immediately the little innocent went down on its knees, joined its hands, and asked the Father for his blessing.

It did this in such a touching manner that, the mother's conduct having drawn towards the place the eyes of the spectators, there arose a confused sound of shouting and crying, from which some serious consequences were apprehended. Speed was therefore made to complete the execution, and in a moment two or three heads dropped off, and rolled to the feet of little Ignatius: he was not surprised. His mother's turn comes: he beholds her head falling off without ever changing colour. At length, with an intrepidity which this age cannot feign, and of which it is naturally incapable, he receives the stroke of death and flies away to Heaven,

where, like the holy Innocents, he plays with his crown on him before the throne of the Lamb.

The mother was worthy of such a son. The whole life of this virtuous woman had only been a preparation for martyrdom. She entered the place of combat, holding in one hand a crucifix, and in the other a beads, and singing the psalm, *Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes! All ye nations, praise the Lord!*

When the first Martyrs had consummated their sacrifice, their heads were placed opposite those who were to be burned, and a fire was kindled. It was some twenty-five feet distant from the stakes, and the wood so arranged that it could make way but slowly: care was even taken to check it as often as it seemed to be lighting up too quickly. This was a refinement of cruelty, by which it was hoped to strike terror into the souls of the Martyrs, to increase their pain, and if possible to make them apostatise.

But all that the devil gained hereby was new disgrace; for Father Spinola, retaining all his coolness, said to the assembly, The fire that is going to burn us is only a shadow of that with which the true God will for ever punish those who refuse to acknowledge Him, or who, having acknowledged and adored Him, do not live according to His holy law. At length the fire approaches, and the Martyrs begin to feel its effects, especially near Father Spinola, from which side the wind blows pretty strong. To see them with their eyes fixed on Heaven, one would have said that they had lost all idea of pain; at the end of an hour, the holocaust was consummated.[1]

The persecution continued after the death of the Martyrs, till, in 1639, the Emperor of Japan forbade any Europeans to set foot on his territories. From this period, generous Catholic Missionaries strove to penetrate into this land hitherto so Christian, but they seem to have all perished. Nevertheless, by one of the most astonishing miracles of Divine Providence, the Faith is still secretly preserved in Japan. In 1865, our Missionaries had the ineffable happiness of discovering there about 200,000 Christians. The "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith"[2] give the history of this discovery, and of the preservation of the Faith during more than two hundred years in an infidel country, without bishops or priests.

The divine torch, thrown out of Japan, was carried into the interior of China and the Indies, and to the Iroquois and Illinois, savage tribes lost in the immense forests of North America.

Meanwhile the devil, enraged to see the Church winning the palm in persecution, and conquering multitudes in distant lands, raised up a new heresy to disturb her joy. Jansenius, Bishop of

[1] Charlevoix, *Hist. du Japon*, t. II, l. XV, p. 275. [2] 1868.

Ypres, in the Netherlands, was, perhaps unwittingly, its author. In a work wherein he pretended to explain the doctrine of St. Augustine regarding grace, and which for this reason he entitled "Augustinus," there were five propositions opposed to the Catholic Faith. He denied among other things the freedom of man in some cases, the impossibility of keeping certain commandments of God, and the universality of redemption.[1]

Pope Innocent X. condemned these propositions. The Jansenists, or disciples of Jansenius, went on maintaining them as much as before. They published a multitude of works, whose deplorable effect was to inspire the Faithful with such a great fear of Communion, by exaggerating the dispositions necessary to receive it, that they gradually brought about an abandonment of the Sacraments. The chief Jansenists were Arnold, Nicholas, St. Cyran, and Quesnel. They were ably refuted, as well as the Protestants, by Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray.

Numerous disorders and heresies continually springing up—the natural consequences of the invasion, daily becoming more general, of a philosophical paganism, a literary paganism, an artistic paganism, a political paganism, and a theatrical paganism—required an expiation. Moreover, to obtain laurels for the Doctors who were combating heresy, zeal for the Missionaries who were carrying the name of the Lord to the nations, and courage for the Martyrs who were confessing the Faith before tyrants, there was need of some fervent Moseses, praying day and night on the holy mountain. This beautiful harmony never appeared more clearly than at this moment. An immense number of contemplative congregations gave themselves up fervently to penance and prayer. The most celebrated was certainly that of La Trappe. Its history is this:—

In the seventeenth century there lived at Paris a young ecclesiastic of most noble and ancient family. Endowed with the rarest gifts, he succeeded in winning the affection of the world. Unfortunately, smitten himself with the love of the world, he lived in a

[1] Here are the propositions:—

1. Some commandments of God are impossible to just men who wish to observe them, and who for this purpose make efforts according to their present strength; the grace that would render them possible is wanting.

2. In the state of fallen nature, no one ever resists interior grace.

3. In the state of fallen nature, one has no need of a freedom that excludes necessity, to make his works meritorious or otherwise; it is enough to have a freedom that excludes constraint.

4. The Semipelagians admitted the necessity of a preventing grace for every good work, even for the beginning of Faith; but they were heretics inasmuch as they thought that the will of man could either resist or obey it.

5. It is a Semipelagian error to say that Jesus Christ died or shed His blood for all mankind.

dissipation and pomp that gradually led him away from the priestly spirit. His name was Armand De Rancé, born in Paris in 1626. God, who had designs of mercy over him, made him understand the dangers to which he was exposing his soul. Yielding to grace, the young Priest sold his patrimony, and distributed the amount in good works. He then retired into a monastery of the Cistercian Order that was called *La Trappe*, and resolved to revive there the ancient rule of St. Benedict. The religious who observe this rule at the present day are called Trappists.

Over the threshold of the monastery we read the words: "This is the house of God; blessed are they who dwell in it." It is so much the house of the God of Charity that all strangers, without distinction of rank, or country, or religion even, are here received and treated as friends, as brethren. The religious who opens the door prostrates himself at the feet of strangers to ask their blessing. This is Abraham falling down before the angels! He then leads them into a hall set apart for guests, and goes immediately to make the visit known to two religious charged with the reception of travellers. The religious, on arriving, prostrate before the strangers, lead them to the foot of the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, and after some moments of prayer take them back again to the hall, where a few verses of the "Imitation" are read for them.

The guests are then intrusted to a religious charged to take care of them, and called the "Brother Host." He leads them to the guest-house, refreshes them as best he can, and gladly renders them all the services in his power. Abraham and the other Patriarchs, those ancient models of hospitality, did not show more eagerness in welcoming and entertaining their guests.

When a religious is about to make his profession, he writes to his family renouncing all his goods; he thinks no more of the world unless to pray for it. When the Abbot hears of the death of the parent of any religious, he recommends the departed soul to the prayers of the community, without mentioning the name; he says in general that the father or mother of one of the brothers is dead. The religious keep their eyes cast down, and never look at strangers. They observe perpetual silence, save that they may speak to their superiors. When they are together at work or elsewhere, they communicate their thoughts by signs.

The Trappists work as they pray, with that gravity which becomes a holy action. Occasionally a brother, striking his hands three times, reminds the others to raise their hearts to God; and lo! every religious, motionless, petrified as it were on the spot where the sound of the signal reaches him, stands rapt in meditation. To see these religious with their hands crossed on their breasts, their

heads a little bowed, their eyes fixed on the ground—to see them standing on scattered stones—you would imagine them so many tomb-statues in the midst of a scene of ruins, you would say that some magic word had stolen the breath out of their bodies. In effect, their souls are no longer on earth, where miseries are so oppressive and joys are blended with so many sorrows; they are in Heaven, they repose in the contemplation of that eternal beauty which will be their reward.

Pope Innocent III. called St. Bernard's monastery the "wonder of the world:" we may say the same of La Trappe. The life led there is truly angelic. There is no sight more touching than the constant recollection of the religious at work, in the refectory, and especially in the church. On fast days they have for dinner a piece of brown bread, with some herbs boiled and seasoned with a little salt; their collation consists of two ounces of dry bread. They sleep with their clothes on. A rough straw mattress, laid on boards, serves them as a bed. They rise at midnight to chant the office. Every day they give several hours to manual labour; this labour consists chiefly in tilling the ground.

What a sight is that of the dying Trappist! What deep philosophy! What a warning to men! Stretched on a little straw and ashes in the sanctuary of the church, he exhorts to virtue his brothers ranged in silence around him, while the funeral bell tolls his last struggle. It is usually the living that encourage the sick to quit life bravely. But here is something more sublime. It is the dying man that speaks of death at the portals of eternity: none has a better right; and, with a voice that seems an echo of rattling bones, he authoritatively summons his companions, his superiors even, to penance. Who would not heave a sigh on seeing this religious, after living in so holy a manner, still afraid of his salvation at the hour of the terrible passage?[1]

When a religious is in his agony, he is carried to the church, where, laid on ashes, he receives the Sacraments. He generally remains in this position till he expires. His brethren do not leave him; a number of them remain near the bier, reciting prayers up to the moment of burial. The funeral service over, the deceased is borne to the cemetery. After long prayers, the Trappists, in order to do violence to Heaven in favour of their brother, prostrate three times on the ground, and three times in this suppliant attitude send forth with a loud voice this cry of pardon: *Vouchsafe, O Lord, to have mercy on a poor sinner!* The brother buried, another grave, which all salute, is half opened for the next to die. Often may a

[1] *Génie du Christianisme*, t. III., p. 240.

religious be seen on his knees at the side of this grave, looking into it with delight, and saying, *I hope it will be mine!*

These desires of death which the Trappist feels are not to be attributed to a disgust for life or to a disrelish for his state. No, they are only the sighs of an exile, who longs for a return to his country, or of a child, that, far away from its dear father, burns to throw itself into his arms. A simple wooden cross, raised over the grave, informs the traveller of the place wherein reposes one of those men of whom the world was not worthy; one of those men who had, perhaps, buried in the obscurity of the cloister, the glory of talent, birth, and wealth. Great and useful lesson for the world, if it could, or rather if it would, understand what is for its good![1]

Let us speak of another wonder that shows us no less splendidly the solicitude of that Providence which watches over the Church. Heresies and schisms bring forth disorders: it is necessary not only to expiate them, but also to recall to the path of duty their unfortunate victims. God, in the infinite treasures of the divine mercy, finds a means of saving guilty man, and rehabilitating him in his own eyes by restoring him to virtue. Such was the end of a great many religious institutions established from century to century, and especially of the Order of *Our Lady of Refuge.*

Founded as an asylum for unfortunate women, the Order of Our Lady of Refuge has this very remarkable feature in it, that it also receives virtuous women, sometimes ladies of rank, who must not be confounded with the penitents. The penitents are admitted to the religious profession, if they desire it and are found to have the proper dispositions. Though members of good character are always chosen for the principal offices of superiority, yet they make, with the penitents who are nuns, but one society. They have but one mind and one heart. They are perfectly the same in dress, and in manner of life. And why should the innocent be thus confounded with the guilty? Why a sacrifice so painful to self-love? The more easily to gain poor sinners to God!

Catholic charity goes still further. The Sisters of fair fame, in order to keep the others by their example in the way of penance, make a special vow to take care of them, and never to consent that the number of penitents, who must be two-thirds of the community, should on any account be reduced. "Herein," says Father Hélyot, "we must so much the more admire the charity of these holy women as it touchingly represents to us the charity which Jesus Christ had

[1] The reform of La Trappe has lately been approved of by the Sovereign Pontiff. A motive of consolation and hope for the future is that the number of Trappists is at present greater than ever before.—See *l'Histoire de la Trappe*, 2 vol. in-8, par M. Guillardin.

for us, when He took the form of a sinner in order to deliver us from the slavery of sin."[1]

In other Congregations, established for the same end, the sweetest and most merciful names covered the errors of those weary stray sheep. They were called "Sisters of the Good Shepherd" and "Sisters of Magdalen," to denote their return to the fold and the pardon which awaited them. That they might have no ideas but those of purity around them, they were clothed in white: whence they were also called the "White Sisters." In some places a crown was put on their heads, and the hymn *Veni, Sponsa Christi!*—Come, O Spouse of Christ!—sung when receiving them. These contrasts were most worthy of a religion which could help without offending, and deal tenderly with the weaknesses of the human heart while rooting out its vices.[2] Could any better means be adopted to teach these poor sinners that repentance is the sister of innocence?

The Congregation of Our Lady of Refuge took its origin at Nancy in the year 1624. It owned as its foundress the venerable Mother Mary Elizabeth of the Cross of Jesus, who was born at Remiremont in Lorraine on the 30th of November, 1592. Her parents were of ancient nobility. From her childhood the young Elizabeth distinguished herself by an extraordinary love of suffering. Young as she was, she wore a hair-cloth three times a week. Though coarse food turned her stomach, she would take nothing else: she so mortified her taste that she at length lost it. So many penances made her very sickly. Hence, her mother was doubly anxious about her: she took care herself to see her go to rest every evening and to settle her bed. But when she departed, the little Elizabeth would rise from her neatly arranged bed and lie down on the floor. It was thus that this angel of expiation chastised her innocent flesh and prepared the way for her vocation.

God, who from her earliest years wished to make her a perfect victim, also permitted creatures to persecute her. She had all the qualities of an accomplished young girl. Yet she became an object of hatred and aversion to her parents, when they saw that she was unwilling to engage in the bonds of marriage. Her mother began by taking away her books of devotion. In their stead she was given the most dangerous novels, and obliged to quit her confessor. Here then was this holy girl deprived of the most powerful means of her sanctification. Her mother would not stop. She made her daughter wear all the finery most likely to show her off to advantage, and took her thus into worldly assemblies; but the young virgin never

[1] Instead of speaking of the *present*, I should have spoken of the *past*. This Order, like so many others, is, alas! no more.

[2] Chateaubriand, t. IV., p. 115.

ceased having recourse to God, and opposed nothing to evil example but prayer, mortification, and the frequentation of the sacraments.

The mother, who made no progress this way, tried another. She overwhelmed with insults the innocent lamb that would not answer a single word. She once beat her so much that she became sick herself, and was obliged to keep her bed for two months. This sickness did not convert her. Hardly on her feet again, this unnatural mother dressed out her daughter in garments all rags. She then took her, thus attired, through the most public streets of the town. To make her more ashamed, she would stop and tell a great many people whom she met that her daughter was mad. The meek Elizabeth, on her side, thought herself happy in being exposed to the contempt of men for the love of God.

At length her parents resolved on engaging her, whether willing or not, in the married state. They drew up an agreement without her knowledge, and threatened to take her life if she did not obey; still they could not obtain any consent from her. Overwhelmed with ill-treatment, she fell sick. This did not prevent all the preparations being made for her wedding. On the day appointed this poor girl, who could scarcely stand, was made rise from her bed in order to be taken to the church. It was thus that she was married.

God was pleased to let her appear in all states a perfect model of the cross. A father's and a mother's anger had begun to plant this cross in her heart, but it was sunk much deeper there by the ill temper of a brutal husband, who increased her sufferings, and even studied to invent new ones. He despised her, and took from her the management of his house. From contempt he passed on to insults, rough treatment, and a rage that induced him to beat her cruelly.

One very cold day, both being in the country and on horseback, it was necessary to cross a river that was pretty rapid. This heartless man, mounted on a fine strong horse, had nothing to fear; but his wife, having only a little pony, was exposed to evident danger in thus attempting to advance. He wished, however, that she should try. She obeyed. But her pony, unable to resist the force of the current, was swept away down a considerable distance, without this pitiless husband's going to any trouble to save his wife. She would have been lost only for some peasants, who drew her out of the water.

Yet, far from complaining, never was there an affectionate wife more untiring in keeping her husband company, and rendering him services. Elizabeth acted as a most humble servant. At length God put an end to her many sufferings. Her husband, father, and

mother, all died. Finding herself free, she retired to Nancy, where she founded the Order of Our Lady, and died the death of the Saints in 1649.[1]

To relieve their corporal miseries and repair the breaches made in their virtues, is not the only way to do good to men. We are no less useful to them if we render God propitious to them by fervent prayers, which disarm His justice, prevent His chastisements, and draw down His blessings.

This remark alone shows us how important it is to have Religious Orders consecrated to expiation. But among all one of the most useful is that of the *Perpetual Adoration*, established to repair the outrages done to Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament. As a matter of fact, if God nowhere shows Himself more amiable than in this mystery, must we not conclude that outrages done to the Adorable Eucharist are the most painful to Him, and, consequently, the most capable of provoking His wrath and bringing on the world the most dreadful punishments? Such outrages required a public, splendid, constant reparation. True, there were Corpus Christi processions established for this purpose; but, by the malice of men, even processions became a new occasion of outraging the Saviour. There remained one other means of reparation, a Religious Order. Providence, which fears to be obliged to punish, inspired the thought of it, and the Order of the Holy Sacrament was established.

It sprang up at Marseilles in 1634. The founder was the Reverend Father Anthony Le Quien, a Dominican. This Order is intended to repair the outrages and irreverences that heretics and the majority of Christians commit against the Adorable Eucharist, and to obtain by fervent and continual prayers that Our Lord, shut up in tabernacles, may be known by the whole world. The religious of this Order, consecrated to recollection, observe a most strict silence. They go very seldom to the parlour, and speak to their relatives only twice a year at most. There are always two in adoration, day and night, before the Blessed Sacrament. They relieve one another every two hours. Nothing, even to their dress, but continually reminds them of the end of their vocation! They wear a black habit. On this habit there is a monstrance embroidered with yellow silk near the heart, and another on the right arm, to say to them continually that their affections and actions ought to be referred to the honour of the Blessed Sacrament.[2]

Though always repulsed, the devil was neither discouraged nor

[1] Hélyot, t. IV., p. 344, et M. Boudon, *le Triomphe de la Croix* ou *Vie de la V. Mère Elisabeth de Jésus.*

[2] Hélyot, t. IV., p. 424.

vanquished. On the contrary, the eighteenth century was about to open, and with it a more general and bloody war. Childhood, so dear to Our Lord, childhood, to which the future belongs, was going to be warmly disputed about by impiety, certain that society would belong to it if it could only possess itself of the rising generations. To meet this new attack, and to preserve at least a small number of the elect who would not, amid the general defection, bow the knee to Baal, Our Lord brought out new auxiliaries to the numerous congregations already devoted to the relief of the poor and the instruction of the young. Among them we count the congregation of the *Hospital Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova*, and that of the *"Nevers" Sisters of Charity and Christian Instruction.*

In 1624, there was born a man of God, who, having become an Augustinian, bore the name of Father Angel Le Proust. A member of the Bourges community, he was appointed Prior of the convent of Lamballe in Brittany. In the course of his travels and missions, he could not behold without pity a multitude of children and poor people quite abandoned, owing to the ruin of many refuges and hospitals. The Spirit of God, with which he was animated, inspired him to found a society of pious Sisters for the restoration of these places so dear to Our Lord. The canonization of St. Thomas of Villanova, Archbishop of Valencia, which occurred in 1659, under Pope Alexander VII., confirmed him in this thought; and the example of this father of the poor led him to walk in his footsteps as far as circumstances permitted. This was the reason why he placed his rising association under the protection of St. Thomas of Villanova, whose name it retained.

God blessed the good man's project. From the beginning, a great many young women presented themselves. He gave them statutes and regulations conformable to the rule of St. Augustine. He did more. Besides setting them a noble example, he communicated to them his spirit: a spirit of charity, simplicity, modesty, and poverty. Faithful to its origin, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova has been, and still is, of great service to the Church.

The mother house, which is in Paris, has the miraculous statue before which St. Francis de Sales obtained deliverance from his terrible temptation of despair. To this house is attached a dispensary, in which the charitable Sisters every day dress sores and wounds gratuitously. Their Order counts a great many houses, especially in Brittany, Picardy, and Normandy. At Paris they have the Hospice of Sick Children or of the Infant Jesus. They everywhere occupy themselves successfully with the care of the sick and the education of poor children. They have also boarding-schools for young girls of a higher class.

Their profession is accompanied with a ceremony which no one can behold without being deeply moved. After the Nun has pronounced her vows, a poor little girl of seven or eight years comes up to her standing near the Holy Table, and places a ring on her finger, saying, "Remember, my sister, that this day you become the spouse of Jesus Christ and the servant of the poor." To whom are these words addressed? Sometimes to the daughter of a noble house. By whom are they addressed? By a poor little beggar. In virtue of a miracle reserved to Catholicity alone, the tables are turned: the mistress becomes the servant, and the servant becomes the mistress.

Though not exactly the same, a like devotedness is the soul of the Congregation of the *Nevers Sisters.*

Founded in the little town of Saint-Saulge, in 1683, by the Reverend Father de Lavenne, a Benedictine Priest, this Congregation, like all strong institutions, grew slowly, preserving with care that spark of sacred fire which the pious founder seemed to have taken from the heart of St. Vincent de Paul. Thus was it able to survive the great catastrophe of the French Revolution, and, in spite of difficulties, to enter on such developments that it counts at present more than two thousand religious. Its zeal, increasing with the wants of the Church and of society, embraces the most varied works. The visitation of the poor and sick at their homes, hospitals, refuges, schools for the children of the people as well as for girls of the better classes, orphanages, penitentiaries, asylums: all these find a place on its list. Though the nuns only make temporary vows, they are no less faithful to their holy engagements, nor less attached to their numerous and painful employments.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having multiplied the means of preserving the just in virtue, and bringing back sinners to repentance. Grant that, whether just or sinners, we may profit of so much goodness.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will daily make a little visit to the Blessed Sacrament*

LESSON LII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.)

The Church attacked: Philosophy; Jansenism. The Church defended: the Abbé De La Salle—Brothers of the Christian Schools; St. Alphonsus Liguori—Congregation of the Holy Redeemer. The Church consoled Conversion of Princes of the Imperial Family of China; Conversion of the Illinois.

In the fifteenth century, Paganism, having returned among Christian nations, brought with it the principle of free thought. Following this principle, professed before their day, Luther and the other pretended reformers said to the peoples, "There is no religious authority that can command you; take the Bible: read it, and believe whatever appears to you true, that is, whatever you like." This fatal principle was only too well understood. The disciples of Luther and Calvin maintained on the pretended authority of the Bible all kinds of errors, and justified all kinds of excesses. Men soon went further. They took the Bible aside, and every one, in order to regulate his belief and conduct, interpreted it according to the suggestions of his own corrupt heart. Whatever flattered the passions was the truth.

Nevertheless this shameless and unbridled impiety durst not, save timidly and rarely, show itself in France during the reign of Louis XIV. But scarcely had this prince descended into the tomb when Philosophy, that is to say, pagan incredulity, threw off its mask. Under the regency of the Duke of Orleans, it brought about a depravity of which the very recollection still makes and ever will make all virtuous persons blush. Thus far, however, it had reserved its shameful mysteries for the upper classes of society. It remained for it to silence the last whisperings of remorse in the souls of its adepts, and to spread its poison among the people.

The philosophers set to work. There was a deluge of impious and obscene pamphlets. France, at least in part, was covered with them, and corrupted even to the marrow. A dull fermentation, a general restlessness, the frightful symptoms of an approaching crisis, soon manifested themselves on all sides. Society found itself in convulsions, like an unfortunate man that has just taken poison. The Lord, who punishes only with regret, raised up great Bishops to point out the danger, and to restrain the peoples on the brink of the precipice. That He might move them, He revealed to them the wonders of His love in the mystery of the *Sacred Heart*. Finally, that He might keep alive at least a spark of faith, by

sealing up Christianity in the hearts of the lower classes, He called forth a real man of faith and charity, if ever there was one.

It was time for him to appear; for the moment was drawing nigh when the shameful and pernicious doctrines of impiety were about to descend even to the lowliest cottage. Already Religion, the chaste daughter of Heaven, had been banished from the palaces of the great. The people in their turn, slavish imitators of their masters, were about to banish it with scandalous ingratitude from the domestic hearth. Most parents would soon cease to mention its name to their children; they would no longer teach them to love and bless it. What do I say? They would teach them by their language and example to despise, hate, and blaspheme it. So much ingratitude was not capable of cooling the love of God towards His guilty creatures.

As He chose the eve of His death to leave ungrateful men the most wonderful token of His charity, by instituting the Blessed Eucharist, it would seem that He wished, on the eve of the bloody outrages that were preparing for him, to give the world one proof more of His paternal solicitude. There was question of saving childhood, of making up to the rising generations for the inability or the perversity of parents. And behold! God leads forth from the treasure-house of His mercy one of those rare men destined to procure the salvation of peoples and the edification of the Church. This man was the Abbé De La Salle, so justly called the friend and benefactor of childhood.

He was born at Rheims on the 30th of April, 1651, of a family as pious as it was respectable. From his earliest years he gave sure signs that he was born for virtue. The sacred names of Jesus and Mary were the first that he distinctly pronounced. All his delight was to make little chapels, and to imitate devoutly the ceremonies of the Church. It was enchanting to see him at the foot of an altar: one would have said that it was an angel clothed in a human body.

Meanwhile this child, enriched with so many graces, began to apply to study; but he sought after human knowledge only as a means of one day fulfilling the duties of his state: very different from most others, who work only through fear, vanity, ambition, or a vain curiosity! Though still young, he declared to his parents that he thought himself called to the ecclesiastical state, and received the tonsure. He was soon afterwards appointed Canon of Rheims, and sent to the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, to make his theological studies.

His modesty gained him the favour of everyone. Having finished his course of theology, he returned to his family, and

began to show some of that ardent zeal which consumed him for the salvation of souls. He laid the foundations of the Christian Schools for little boys: some kind ladies helped him in his enterprise. The good fruit of these first establishments inspired a desire of having new ones; but the works of God must suffer contradiction. That of the Abbé De La Salle should receive this glorious seal.

Because he had living with him the masters of the new establishments, and had transformed his house into a religious community, the world treated him as a fool, whose head was turned with indiscreet zeal: the more reserved were satisfied to pity him. He, on his part, arming himself with patience and confidence in Him whose glory he was seeking, let people talk, and went on with his work. After the storm followed a calm.

Informed of the benefits that the new Order was conferring on poor children, the Curé of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, wished to have some Brothers to direct the schools of his parish. The Abbé De La Salle agreed. The schools were established and a novitiate founded. The Order grew amid contradictions, poverty, and contempt. The holy founder gave the Brothers a number of rules full of wisdom, as well for their own guidance as for that of the children. These rules, still in vigour, are far superior to all the plans laid down by men of the world for the education of youth.

Meanwhile, the Abbé De La Salle was suffering much from violent rheumatic pains, and many a time did he sigh for the moment of his deliverance. At length the Lord heard his earnest prayer. After receiving the Last Sacraments with angelic piety, he addressed the Brothers, assembled round his bed, in these words, which apply equally to all Christians: "If you wish to persevere and die in your state, never have intercourse with worldly people; for you would gradually begin to like their mode of acting, and would enter so deep into their conversation that you could not help admiring their discourses. This would lead you to unfaithfulness, and, being no longer faithful in the observance of your rules, you would become disgusted with your state and at length abandon it."

A cold sweat that set in prevented him from saying more. He fell again into his agony, and pronounced these words: "Yes, I adore in all things the dealings of God with me." A few hours afterwards he joined his hands, raised his eyes to Heaven, and surrendered his soul to his Creator, the same day[1] that his Saviour had died on the cross for all mankind: the 7th of April, 1719. This great servant of God was then sixty-eight years of age.[2]

[1] Good Friday is here referred to. (*Tr.*)

[2] The process of his beatification has been begun.

Among the Brothers there is a rule, very difficult no doubt, but full of wisdom. According to this rule, they cannot speak at recreation until they have obtained the permission of the Brother Director. This rule, as well as all the others that establish their institute, was approved at Rome by Pope Benedict XIII. in 1725. God has blessed this useful Order. It counts at present more than three hundred establishments and two thousand Brothers, in France, Italy, Belgium, and even outside Europe, giving a gratuitous and Christian education to more than a hundred and forty thousand children.

Never can this Order be esteemed as much as it deserves. For the Brothers are (*a*) the instruments of the goodness of God in the salvation of the poorest and most abandoned children. God wishes that all men should come to a knowledge of Religion. But how, especially in these evil times, can the children of the poor acquire this knowledge, if there are no Christian and gratuitous schools in which the truths of Religion are taught? The Brothers supply (*b*) for the deficiencies of fathers and mothers in the Christian instruction of their children. The poor, employed as they necessarily are in labouring for the support of their families, have neither the time nor the means to instruct their children. How kind, then, is it of Providence to give poor, abandoned children parents according to grace, who make up for the most important duties of parents according to nature! The Brothers are (*c*) the apostles and guardian angels of the children. What is there more common in town or country than to see idle and roaming young people, learning all the evil that the devil puts in their way, engaging in amusements that destroy shame and lead to the greatest crimes? Now, what need have these crowds of children that some persons should keep them away from such disorders, and inspire them with so great a horror thereof that they will themselves avoid the danger!

All the benefits that the Brothers procure for little boys, the Sisters devoted to instruction procure for little girls. What we have said of the former must be applied to the latter. The same devotedness merits the same praise.

While the institution of the Venerable Abbé De La Salle was depositing in the heart of society a germ of salvation that should be developed after the catastrophe of which France was about to be the victim, there was a holy Bishop accomplishing in Italy another mission equally important. Jansenism, of which we spoke in the last century, had united with impiety to sap the foundations of Religion. Impiety struck its blows in the broad daylight, and its ally Jansenism worked in the dark. A fierce wolf, hidden under the skin of a sheep, it strives to reach the heart of the Church.

Catechism, asceticism, literature, sermons, books of piety, theology, liturgy: there is nothing but it touches, and whatever it touches it defiles. A slavish fear takes the place of charity towards God. The Sacraments are abandoned, are turned into mockery: the august Eucharist, the vital principle of Catholic piety, is an object of terror. The true spirit of Christianity is extinguished. But Providence is present: numberless barriers will be set up against the threatened invasion.

Among the men whom God called on this serious occasion to combat Jansenism, and to renew piety by bringing men near that admirable Sacrament which is its source, no one refuses to place the holy Bishop Alphonsus Mary Liguori in the first rank. This great Saint was born at Naples on the 17th of September, 1696. Endowed with the happiest dispositions, Alphonsus learned, like the young Tobias, to fear God from his childhood. Devotion towards Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, obedience to his parents, an angelic modesty, and a great love for the poor were the virtues that shone in him from the dawn of his career. His progress in the sciences was so rapid that at sixteen years of age he received the degree of doctor with applause in the University of Naples.

He soon practised the legal profession with success; but an unforeseen accident that happened to him while pleading a cause made him feel more keenly than ever the vanity of worldly things, and decide on entering the ecclesiastical state. His parents were for a long time opposed to his vocation. At length the will of God was so clearly manifested that they gave their consent. Once promoted to Holy Orders, Alphonsus applied himself earnestly to the virtues of the sublime state which he had embraced. The poor inhabitants of the country were the special objects of his care. He went about speaking to them of God, and, after the example of Our Lord, preaching in the most obscure villages with admirable fruit. This was because he added to eloquence the practice of mortification, prayer, and poverty.

He soon gathered round him a number of Priests full of zeal for the salvation of souls, and thus laid the foundations of the *Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, intended for the instruction of poor country people. After endless difficulties and contradictions raised against him by all sorts of persons, Alphonsus obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff a confirmation of this new Religious Order. Providence blessed it. It is now spread over the various parts of Europe, to the great edification of the Church.

His Congregation established, the Saint employed himself in writing books for the direction of souls and the refutation of errors. Such was the ability with which he fulfilled this difficult task that

Sovereign Pontiffs have declared this pious and learned author to have been raised up by Providence to stem the torrent of evil doctrines spreading with frightful rapidity during the last century The Saint, in spite of himself, was appointed Bishop of St. Agatha, in the kingdom of Naples. In his new position Alphonsus showed himself, as elsewhere, a tender and watchful father, a firm and enlightened superior, an experienced director, and a missionary full of zeal.

He was so charitable towards the poor that, in a famine which visited the country, he sold all that he possessed to relieve them. This not sufficing for their wants, they went in crowds to look for the charitable Bishop, who, meeting them, began to weep, and said, "I have nothing more, my poor children; I sold all to help you. I wanted to borrow for your sake, but I was refused." And while these touching words fell from his lips, abundant tears ran down his cheeks.

Ardent as was his charity for the poor, his love for God, especially for Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament, was as lively and tender. He has left a proof of this in his excellent works, so full of confidence and piety that they seem to have been written on the burning Heart of the Saviour. We need only mention his Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin, The Practice of the Love of Our Lord, and The School of Bethlehem.

That filial confidence in Our Lord which Alphonsus so eloquently recommended to others he practised himself. We cannot refrain from citing an example. One day his religious found themselves in extreme want: the cash-box was empty. It was in the morning, and there were only two loaves for dinner. The housekeeper came to inform him. "Don't be uneasy," he replied. Scarcely had he spoken when a knock was heard at the door:[1] it was two beggars asking an alms. The Saint ordered the two loaves that made up all the provisions of the house to be given them. The housekeeper could not help remonstrating with him, and saying in a rather vexed tone that he would no longer be able to have a dinner for the community unless care were taken to provide the materials for it. "My brother," said Alphonsus to him, "have you ever been in want of what was necessary? Cannot Our Lord change the very stones into bread? He daily feeds the little birds: will He abandon us? Man of little faith, have courage!"

Hereupon the Saint withdraws, enters the sacristy, and puts on a rochet. He then goes and casts himself at the foot of the altar. After a moment's adoration, he ascends the steps, makes a profound

[1] A peine avait-il parlé qu'on sonne à la porte. (*Tr.*)

bow, and, rapping gently at the door of the tabernacle, says with singular confidence, "My God! I know well that Thou art here. We have no bread." He makes a second salutation, and retires.

How could Our Lord, who said, *Come to Me all you that are burdened, and I will refresh you*,[1] resist such childlike confidence and simplicity? Scarcely has the Saint returned to his room when he hears a knock. He is called for; he goes down: it is a messenger with a large sum of money from an unknown lady. And so the community have whereon not only to dine, but to maintain themselves for a long time!

A few years before his death, Alphonsus renounced his bishopric of St. Agatha to retire into a convent of his Order at Nocera, where he lived to the age of ninety-one years. When he was at the point of death, the religious came to ask his blessing and last advice. He granted them this twofold favour, and with a touching voice concluded thus: "My children, save your souls." A little while afterwards he fell into a sweet agony, and departed this life in the peace of the Lord on the 1st of August, 1787.[2] Beatified by Pius VII. in 1815, he was canonised by Gregory XVI., on the 26th of May, 1839.

The numerous conversions prepared by the Abbé De La Salle, or effected by St. Liguori, were not enough to indemnify the Church for the losses that she had sustained. In those most evil days, impiety raised its head and marched to its purpose with banners unfurled. Publications more licentious than ever before, and full of the most detestable calumnies, were daily appearing, and were dragging into the abyss a multitude of weak and presumptuous souls. But God will always have the number of His elect! If to-day the Church sheds a tear of sorrow, she will to-morrow shed one of joy. If great scandals afflict her, splendid conversions, noble examples will show forth her glory, though it were necessary to seek them at the ends of the earth. This is what happened in the times of which we speak.

Missionaries had penetrated even to the court of the Emperor of China. Among the princes of the royal family, there was one who had thirteen sons. The third was a distinguished military officer, well instructed in his religion, and in the sciences of his country. He made the acquaintance of a Missionary, and asked him for an explanation of some of the truths of the Christian Religion. The Missionary hastened to gratify him. Grace worked on the heart of the young prince, and he resolved to be baptised; but many

[1] *Matt.*, xi, 28.

[2] Italian *Life of St. Alphonsus*. Regarding the house of Nocera, see the *Trois Rome*, t. II.

obstacles stood in the way of so serious a step. Meanwhile, one of his brothers was sent to the army. Before setting out, he asked for Baptism with so much earnestness that the Missionary felt it impossible to refuse him. He baptised him, and called him *Paul*. He granted the same favour to the prince's wife, and gave her the name of *Mary*. The brother whom we mentioned above, touched by these examples, also asked for Baptism, and received it with all his family. The other brothers had one after another the same happiness.

But the cross is always the portion of the friends of God. Through hatred of the Faith, all this illustrious family was condemned to banishment, and the father, still an idolator, was included in the same sentence. They departed full of joy that they had been thought worthy to suffer something, that is to say, the loss of honours and riches, for the glory of Jesus Christ. This family consisted of thirty-seven princes of various ages, as many princesses, and about three hundred servants, most of whom had received baptism. Banishment was only the beginning of their sufferings: they should render a more illustrious testimony to Jesus Christ. The Emperor commanded these generous confessors to be degraded from their rank as members of the imperial family and laden with chains.

New severities were soon tried. An order was given to take some of these fervent neophytes with a view of putting them to death, doubtless in the hope of terrifying the rest. They were therefore summoned before the tribunal of a superior mandarin, and they appeared to the number of thirty-six. Nine chains were put on each one of them,—even on the smallest children, for whom there were none suited to their age. Eight of the party were picked out, and cast into various prisons. Several lost their lives in the midst of the most unworthy treatment. Others were sent into a place of exile where they died. Some of the princesses met the same fate. This illustrious family of martyrs and confessors imitated the fervour, the charity, the patience, the lively faith of the Early Christians, and prepared the way, by their example and blood, for the new conquests of Religion in the vast empire of China.[1]

Immense as that God who is its Author, the Catholic Religion was filling up the places left vacant by modern pagans. In China it is the princes of the royal family whom it bows under the yoke of the Gospel. In North America it calls the savages, and makes them the children of Abraham. Holy Religion! how canst thou take so many tones of voice and vary thy means so well as to find the way

[1] Extract from the Letters of Père Parennin.

to every heart? It is a secret of thine own; it is the seal of thy divine origin. We are going to admire it in the conversion of a new people.

Amid some of the coldest forests of America wandered the nation of the Illinois. They were cruel and savage above all others, as one trait in their character will show. Let us hear a missionary who knew them before their conversion:—

"The greatest glory of an Illinois," he says, "is to make prisoners and lead them off alive. When he arrives with one of his prey, all the village turns out, and lines the road along which the prisoner has to pass. This reception is very cruel: some pull off his nails; others cut off his fingers or ears; others beat him with sticks. The prisoner being condemned to death, they immediately drive into the ground a stake, to which they fasten him by both hands. He is then obliged to sing his death-song. All the savages seating themselves round the stake, there is kindled at a short distance from it a large fire, in which are reddened their tomahawks, bullets, and other such things.

"They then go, one after another, and apply these red hot instruments of torture to various parts of his body. Some burn him with flaming brands; others slash him with their knives; others cut off a piece of his flesh already roasted, and eat it in his presence. Others again fill his wounds with powder, and rub it all over his body: after which they set a light to it. At length, all torment him as they choose, and this for four or five hours, sometimes even for two or three days. The louder the cries that the violence of these pains draws from the victim, the more amusing is the spectacle to these barbarians."[1]

Such were the Illinois before their conversion. Now, behold them after it: it is again a Missionary who speaks:—

"The Illinois, having come to see us, delighted us by their piety and their edifying life. Every evening they said the beads in two choirs, and every morning they heard Mass, at which, especially on Sundays and Holidays, they sang various prayers of the Church, in keeping with the office of the day. This spectacle, which was new, attracted an immense crowd to the church, and inspired a tender devotion. During the course of the day and after supper they used often, either alone or together, to sing sacred hymns, such as the *Dies Iræ, Vexilla Regis, Stabat Mater*, &c.

"Anyone hearing them would easily perceive that they took more pleasure in singing these holy canticles than most savages and even many French people take in singing light and often improper songs.

[1] *Lettres édif. abrég.*, t. IV., p. 102 et 314.

One would be surprised, as I myself was on arriving at this mission, to see what an immense number of French people there are, not near so well instructed in their religion as these neophytes. There is hardly a story of the Old or the New Testament that they do not know. They have excellent methods for assisting at the Holy Mass, and receiving the Sacraments. These good savages have not been left in ignorance of a single one of our mysteries or of our duties. The first thought that strikes those who meet the Illinois is how much it must have cost and must still cost the Missionaries to form them in such a manner to Christianity. But their earnestness and patience have been amply rewarded by the blessings which it has pleased God to pour down on their labours."[1]

It was not only over their cruelty that Religion triumphed in converting the Illinois, but also over their gross ignorance. Of this amazing ignorance, here is a simple proof. One of these savages, named Chicagou, was brought to France. On his return home, all that he related to his fellow-countrymen appeared incredible: he himself sometimes seemed to regard his voyage as a dream. "You have been paid," people said to him, "to make us believe all these fine stories." "We would gladly believe," said his friends to him, "that you saw what you tell us; but something must have bewitched your eyes, for it is impossible that France could have been so grand as you paint it." When he said that in France there were five cabins on the top of one another, and that they were as high as the tallest trees; that there were as many people in the streets of Paris as stalks of grass in the prairies, or mosquitoes in the woods; and that people there walked about and even made long journeys in movable leather cabins, he would no more be believed than when he said that he had seen long cabins full of sick persons, where able surgeons made the most wonderful cures. "Look here!" he would say to them pleasantly, "if you lost an arm, a leg, an eye, or a tooth, and were in France, you could get another in its stead, without a sign of any difference appearing."[2] This simple account enables us to understand what the Missionaries so often repeat to the savages, that before making them Christians they must make them men.

Admirable Religion, ever old and ever new! the miraculous change that you have wrought for eighteen centuries one after another on the various peoples of the world, you still work to-day. As a proof of this fruitful power, we are going to present a letter written to the Holy Father in 1840 by the King of the Gambier Islands, converted to the Faith with all his people four years pre-

[1] *Lettres édif. abrég.*, t. IV., p. 107 et 314. [2] *Ibid.*, t. IV., p. 102 et 314.

viously. Who would believe on reading it that, a short time before, the author was a *cannibal ?*

"Our Father,

"I love you who love us so much. Permit us to address our homage to you, because we love God and we also love you. You sent us a Bishop and some Priests to teach Mangareva the holy word of Jesus Christ: you are the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church. Bless us who now love God truly. Not long ago we were abandoned to ourselves like the beasts of the fields; we were a wicked people, resembling the brute rather than man. It is only a short time since we became good under the reign of God. We are now your children and the children of the Church. What a happiness that you were pleased to turn your thoughts towards us!

"We rejoice in the Blessed Mary. We have Our Mother at Mangareva. It was the Missionary Caret who brought us her statue. We are very fond of Mary, and this country has been consecrated to her. Mary is, therefore, our Mother, and we are her children. Mangareva has celebrated a festival in her honour, and it was a most beautiful festival. Mary is the object of our warmest affections.

"We have also a great love for Jesus Christ: we love Him above all things. We are now building Him a stone church. We made a very long journey in a procession of the Blessed Sacrament through love for Jesus. We carried Jesus Christ in the procession and solemnly did Him honour. These days are days of grace. We love God sincerely, and our whole study is to go to Heaven: this has made us worthy to receive our First Communion.

"You made me a present of magnificent vestments, which will be carefully preserved, and used on great solemnities. The King of France has likewise sent me a magnificent sword, which will also be kept for grand ceremonies. I set great value on the robe that you sent me: I think it very handsome. It is now some time since the Missionaries settled at Mangareva. We think that Caret and Laval were not here merely as travellers. It was they who taught the good word to the people of Mangareva. Pray for graces for them.

"Formerly we were almost without food: we had nothing but maize; now we have plenty. We used to be idle; we are now laborious. The Missionaries have accustomed us to work.

"You are good and clement. You have shown yourself such towards a people lost in these distant seas. My heart belongs entirely to Jesus Christ: I am one of those who approach the Holy Table most frequently. Cyprian is my confessor. We are firmly attached to the word of Jesus Christ, and the Missionaries excite us to virtue."

This letter, of touching simplicity, renders a splendid testimony to the truth, so often proved in this Catechism, that the Gospel never makes way among a people without bestowing on them two benefits: virtue and civilisation.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having accomplished in so evident a manner the prophecy that the people of the East and the West would embrace the Gospel, while the children of the kingdom should be cast out. Graciously preserve the Faith among us.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never read doubtful books.*

LESSON LIII.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church attacked: Voltaire. Judgment of God on Voltaire. Rousseau. Judgment of God on Rousseau. Voltaire and Rousseau judged each by the other and by himself. The Church defended: Bergier, Nonnotte, Bullet, Guénée. The Church consoled: Madame Louisa of France.

THE pagan ideas sown in Europe by the *Renaissance*, and developed by Machiavelli in political affairs, by Luther in religious affairs, by humanists in philosophy, literature, and the drama, and by artists in painting, sculpture, and architecture, had gradually spread over the public mind, and prepared the way for a complete change in the social as well as in the religious order. In proportion as these ideas acquired new strength, they were more concisely formulated. They ended by finding personification in a band of pretended scholars, known under the name of philosophers. Supported by the authority of kings themselves and by the openly professed opinion of the classes coming forth from the colleges of the *Renaissance*, the new pagans throw off the mask, and boldly declare that their object is to destroy Christianity. For fifty years their war-cry is the horrid blasphemy, *Let us crush the monster!*

Great and little set to work. Some search in the bowels of the earth; others question the stars. These ransack the annals of ancient peoples; those make calculations. All strive to find Religion in fault, and to set it in opposition with natural science, the traditions of races, and the monuments of history. To this task of blackening, they add that of boasting.

Pagan antiquity is praised to the skies. The arts, the literature, the men, the freedom, the republican institutions of Rome and Greece, are the everlasting subjects of eulogy. At the same time, heaps of pamphlets are scattered about, and infidelity and libertinism are preached from the house-tops. Man becomes flesh, and, as it was in the days before the deluge, the Spirit of God, no longer able to rest in him, prepares to depart.

Among those men whose names should be pronounced only with horror, since by their malice they drew down innumerable scourges upon us, there were two in particular who ought to be known, that little children themselves may learn to fear the poison of their doctrines: Voltaire and Rousseau, doubly guilty, because they were apostates from the Faith and abusers of genius. For the rest, their scandalous lives could not but make them enemies of religion and apostles of infidelity. You must never forget that infidelity—shame on it!—always takes its rise in the mire, and is never defended but by libertinism. On the contrary, the Catholic Religion—all honour to it!—has never any opponents but men whom no virtuous soul would wish to resemble.

Young people, who respect the words of Voltaire or Rousseau! men of mature years, who keep their books in your libraries! come, I will unveil for you the baseness of your masters, the vileness of your idols.

Francis Mary Arouet, called De Voltaire, was born at Chatenay, near Paris, in 1694. His father was a notary. He was brought up in the college of the Jesuits at Paris. In studying pagan authors, he acquired a passionate relish for Paganism that never left him. Voltaire was a soul devoid of Christianity, intoxicated with Paganism. The rashness of his opinions soon frightened his masters. One of them told him one day that he would be the standard-bearer of impiety in France: the result justified the prediction only too well. At the age of sixteen years, the young Arouet left the college, and lived, as seemed his right, in the most elegant and corrupt society of the capital. Several quarrels that he had with his father decided the latter on sending him into Holland as secretary to an embassy. Scarcely had the decent young man arrived at La Haye, when he found himself under orders to return to his family, in consequence of his libertinism. He recovered the friendship of his father only by taking employment with an attorney; but his negligence and little taste for jurisprudence soon made him give it up.

A bad son, Voltaire was also a bad citizen. In 1715 he received, for causes more than trifling, a blow from an old actor in scenes of comedy. A short time afterwards, he was marked with a gash by an officer whom he had calumniated.

A bad son and a bad citizen, Voltaire was also a bad subject. After the death of Louis XIV., some low lampoons appeared regarding the departed monarch. Voltaire, justly suspected of being the author of one of them, was put into the Bastile. Scarcely out of prison, he was obliged to leave Paris, because, linked in friendship with the authors of a conspiracy that had just been foiled, he was accused of taking part in it. He retired to a country residence at Sully, where his libertinism was not slow to manifest itself.

He next set out for Holland, where he remained for some time. His restless spirit brought him back to the capital. The insolent language that he dared to use towards a young nobleman, merited for him a severe beating with sticks from the servants of the latter; and then, on the part of the authorities, six months in the Bastile, with an order to leave France after the expiration of his term.

Thus, at the age of thirty-one years, Voltaire had been driven out of his father's house and an attorney's house, sent off to Holland, buffeted by a play-actor, more roughly treated by an officer, thrown into the Bastile, banished from Paris, ill-used by valets for insulting their master, thrown again into the Bastile, and banished from France. Philosophers! admire the conduct of your apostle.

Coming out of the Bastile, Voltaire passed over to England, then peopled with "Freethinkers," who worked with all their might to destroy the foundations of Christianity. At London he published his "Henriade," and cheated his bookseller, who renewed on the poet's shoulders that correction administered three years previously by the servants of the Knight De Rohan. This painful occurrence made Voltaire implore permission to return to France. He obtained it. Lodging on the outskirts of Paris, he there led for some time an obscure and almost hidden life, dividing his time between literary labours and financial speculations. Associated with others in the work of supplying the army of Italy, the philosopher made an income of a hundred and sixty thousand francs. The poor man!

Denounced to the Keeper of the Seals on the subject of the deification of a play-actress, which was only one series of attacks on Religion and its ministers, and on the nation in general, Voltaire fled to Rouen, where he concealed himself for seven months in the house of a printer, whom he ruined a short time afterwards by a swindle worthy of the occupants of the galleys.

The remainder of Voltaire's life corresponded to these beginnings. It presents nought but one long record of libertinism, impiety, flattery of the great, hypocrisy, and sacrilege, closed by a frightful death. The wicked writer had retired to Ferney, near Geneva. It was thence that he flung out against his enemies, against Religion, and against the government, a multitude of dia-

tribes, wherein we know not which to despise most, the raging fanaticism of the patriarch of modern philosophy or his shocking cynicism. "Heap on lies, heap on lies boldly, my friends," he wrote to his acolytes: "something of them always remains. . . It is of great importance for me to be read, but very little to be believed."

In 1778 he obtained leave to go to Paris. His entrance into the city was a real triumph. The triumph of Voltaire: these words cause a shudder and a blush! The triumph of Voltaire, that is to say, of cynicism, of impiety, of all vices, foreshadows, by giving us an idea of French society in those days, both the terrible catastrophe which five years later on should redden the soil of France with blood, and the unexampled degradation which should show to the world the first of nations offering its incense to the refuse of criminals—Marat! But the living God, outraged for seventy years by the most ungrateful of men, was soon to have His turn.

Voltaire had reached his eighty-fourth year. A few days after his entrance into the capital he was seized with a vomiting of blood. This did not prevent him from becoming a freemason. But all is over; the measure of justice is filled up; the hour of the divine justice is come. Let us remark in the first place that the end of the standard-bearer of impiety was so much the more striking as he was attacked by his mortal illness at the very time when he was promising himself the triumph of atheism. His partisans themselves published the letter in which he wrote these words to Alembert: "In twenty years God will be a plaything." This blasphemous prediction bore the date of the 25th of February, 1758. Now, it was on the 25th of February, 1778, that he was seized with the vomiting of blood that brought him to his grave: twenty years of an interval, day for day!

The violence of the disease soon made him belie his profession of incredulity. He called for one of those Priests whom he had so often insulted and calumniated in his writings—the Abbé Gauthier, Vicar of Saint-Sulpice. On his knees, he acknowledged his faults. He also deposited in the hands of this clergyman an authentic retractation of his impieties and scandals.

He declared particularly that he died in the Catholic Religion. This profession of faith seeming very suspicious from a man who had already made similar ones, the Curé of Saint-Sulpice wished to visit Voltaire; but his friends took precautions to prevent him, as one of them said, from making a new plunge. They would not leave him for a single moment, and thereby rendered useless the zeal and charity of the Curé of Saint-Sulpice.

Meanwhile the guilty old man was drawing near to his eternity.

Perhaps he flattered himself with the hope of completing the great work of his reconciliation with God; but death anticipated the last succours. The philosopher finds himself seized with awful fears. In a terrible voice he cries out, "I am abandoned by God and men!" He invokes the Lord whom he has blasphemed; but half a century of sneers at Religion seems to have worn out the patience of the Most High. No Priest arrives. The sick man falls into the raging convulsions of despair. With rolling eyes, pale and trembling, he throws himself into every position, he tears his flesh, he devours—his excrements! That hell which he has so much ridiculed he sees open before him; he groans with terror, and his last sigh is that of a reprobate.

I am abandoned by God and men! These dreadful words, and the manner in which they were uttered, almost froze with fear the celebrated Tronchin, who attended Voltaire in his last illness.

"Call to mind all the rage and fury of Orestes," says this Protestant physician, who witnessed this frightful death, "and you will have only a faint idea of the rage and fury of Voltaire in his last illness." "It would have been well," he used often to repeat, "if our philosophers had witnessed the remorse and frenzy of Voltaire: a more salutary lesson could not have been given to those whom he had corrupted by his writings." The Marshal De Richelieu beheld this fearful spectacle, and he could not help exclaiming, "Truly, this is too much; no one can bear it." Thus died the patriarch of infidelity on the 30th of May, 1778.[1]

While Voltaire was corrupting youth and addressing himself to shallow minds, John James Rousseau spoke to men who prided themselves on their powers of reflection, and thence took the title of Freethinkers. A Protestant, Rousseau developed and applied to society the dangerous principles of Pagan Cæsarism and of the Reformation. Impious, faithless, debauched, he was worthy to be reckoned among the enemies of a Religion which condemns all vices and commands all virtues.

John James Rousseau was born at Geneva in 1712. His childhood was spent in reading pagan authors. "At eight years of age," he says, "Plutarch became my favourite. The pleasure that I took in reading him again and again cured me somewhat of novels. By those delightful readings was formed that free and republican spirit, that indomitable and proud character—impatient of yoke or slavery—which has tormented me all my life. Continually occupied with Rome and Athens, living so to speak with their great men, I imagined myself at one time a Roman, and at another a Greek."

[1] See his life and the lives of his disciples in our *Voltairianisme*, t. V de la *Révolution*.

Rousseau's father, who was a clockmaker, placed him as a boarder with a Protestant minister. The only fruit that the pupil derived therefrom was to learn a little Latin and to contract some very bad habits. Engaged as a clerk by the registrar of Geneva, he was declared unfit and sent away.

After an apprenticeship of some months to an engraver, during which time idleness, lying, and stealing became his favourite vices, as he acknowledges himself, he passed into Savoy. A kind ecclesiastic of this country supplied him with means to go to Turin, where he had himself instructed in the Catholic Religion. Two months afterwards he renounced Protestantism. Making nothing by his pretended conversion but twenty francs, he entered the service of the Countess of Vercelli as a lackey; but, soon turned out of her house on account of a theft which he had committed, and of which he falsely accused a young maid, he found employment with Count Gouvon, first equerry to the Queen of Sardinia. To the kindness of his new master, Rousseau corresponded with a misbehaviour and impudence that necessitated his banishment.

Without means, without influence, he feigned piety, and addressed himself to a lady who welcomed him and lavished on him the care of a mother. By her advice he entered a seminary, in order to embrace the ecclesiastical state; but he was dismissed as good for nothing. No longer knowing what to do, he wended his way through Switzerland with a pretended Greek bishop who was making collections for the Holy Sepulchre. These two honest travellers had to be arrested at Soleure and put in prison.

The French ambassador, pitying the condition of the young vagrant, helped him to go to Paris. Here, he felt all the horrors of destitution. At last he went to Lyons, and succeeded in getting into the house of M. De Bably, provost of this city, as tutor. He stole this gentleman's Arbois wine, and drank it with delight while reading novels. After various other acts quite as honourable, followed by a journey to Italy, Rousseau returned to Paris in 1745, and gave himself up publicly to libertinism. This scandalous life he led for twenty-five years in the face of all Europe. To libertinism he added impiety. He had abjured Calvinism for Catholicity; and, having gone to Geneva, he soon abjured Catholicity for Calvinism.

His principal work, *Emile*, was censured by the Sorbonne, condemned by the Archbishop and Parliament of Paris, and burned even in Geneva by the hand of the public executioner. Pursued by the authorities of France and Switzerland, Rousseau fled to England. Ill received, drenched with misfortunes, he sought and by dint of earnest entreaty obtained permission to settle again in Paris, on condition of never more writing on religion or politics. A last trait

will make known this patriarch of philosophy. John James, who wrote so forcibly on maternal tenderness and the duties of parents towards their children, coldly put his own offspring into the House for Foundlings! Such as the life is, such is the death. According to all probabilities, Rousseau shot himself with a pistol, after taking poison, and died in 1778.

Voltaire and Rousseau, the last of men after those who esteem them: these—O philosophers of our days and irreligious men of all shades and conditions!—these are your two apostles, your two evangelists, your two saints, the authors of what we have seen[1] and of what we see. Imitate therefore your fathers, fall down before them, and say, if you dare, *I wish to be like them!* For the rest, before you utter the words, it is well that you should know them, not only by hearsay, but from themselves. Come, therefore, to Ferney and Geneva! Lend an ear to the complimentary language that they use; and, by their esteem for each other, learn to regulate yours.

Voltaire writes of Rousseau that he is a runaway from Geneva; a person who has played his pranks well; a scoundrel; a blackguard; a wild mountebank, gathering crowds on the new bridge; a village fool, writing absurdities worthy of Bicêtre; a boy of impudent loquacity, which women mistake for eloquence; a hypocrite; an enemy of the human race; a sour and stubborn terrier; a cunning desperado, full of pride and rancour; a shabby fellow; an impious wretch; an atheist; a poor rustic, who might be able to clamber up a ladder; an author who deserved to be hanged for his abominable books; a man without faith or religion. This is Rousseau! His pretended wife is an infamous old hag, whose crooked hands are all bitten by the dogs of hell.

You are very accomplished, Monsieur De Voltaire! You belong to a neatly attired family. But was it not you, a distinguished writer, a model of politeness and refined taste, who said that, in the conversations of respectable people, all express their opinions but none offend, and it is permitted to enlighten but not to insult? Now, you offend, you insult. Therefore, you are not—a gentleman!

Less clever in the art of insulting, Rousseau answers Voltaire by attacking his writings:—Abject soul, thou wishest in vain to degrade thyself. It is thy sad philosophy that makes thee like the beasts; but thy genius declares against thy principles, and the very abuse of thy faculties proves their excellence in spite of thee.

[1] *Voltaire did not see all that he did, but he did all that we see!* Thus wrote, in the midst of the blood-stained ruins of thrones and altars, the philosopher Condorcet, an admirer and disciple of Voltaire. A few months afterwards he might have repeated these words at the moment of committing that suicide to which the doctrines of his master had led him.

If therefore you ask Voltaire who is Rousseau, he tells you that he is a scoundrel, a blackguard, a dog, a wild mountebank.

If you ask Rousseau who is Voltaire, he tells you that he is an abject soul, like the beasts.

But there is something better still, and less to be suspected: it is Voltaire and Rousseau doing justice to themselves and to their writings. Would you like to hear them?

Listen to Voltaire: I have lost all the days of my existence in composing an immense lot of trash, the half of which should never have seen the light.

Now to Rousseau: To say and prove with equal readiness both the for and the against, to maintain everything and to believe nothing, has always been the favourite amusement of my mind. I cannot look at any of my books without a shudder. Instead of instructing, I corrupt; instead of feeding, I poison. But passion leads me astray, and with all my fine discourses I am only a criminal. All that I desire is some corner of the earth where I may die in peace, without touching pen or paper.

Voltaire and Rousseau: philosophy, then, has nothing better to oppose to us! O great God, God of holiness, God of purity, God of all virtues! can it then be that Thou wouldst choose them as Thy representatives on earth, as the interpreters of Thy sacred truths, as the teachers of the human race, whilst Thou wouldst condemn to error all the most virtuous men that ever were, all the most intelligent, all the most like to Thee?

And now you will ask me, perhaps, how are we to explain the eulogies and the fanatical admiration of which Voltaire and Rousseau were the objects. The answer is not difficult: they spoke aloud what their century thought secretly; their impure voices were echoes of the corrupt hearts with which the world was full.

So many scandals required a reparation; so many attacks, a prompt reply. The reply was made, and made well, by learned apologists, such as Bergier, Nonnette, Bullet, and Guénée. The expiation was offered chiefly by an illustrious victim who drew on herself the eyes of all Europe, and by the martyrdom of the purest among the clergy and laity.

On the steps of the fairest throne in the world was born a young princess, the idol of the court by her brilliant accomplishments, the joy of her mother by her innocence, and the love of her sisters by the vivacity of her mind and the sweetness of her disposition. This princess was Madame Louisa of France, daughter of Louis XV. All of a sudden, in the bloom of youth, at the moment when a long future of festivities and honours was opening out before her, at the moment when she was already tasting the joys of Versailles, she was

to be seen taking the way to St. Denis's, and humbly begging to be admitted among the daughters of St. Teresa; quitting the gilt apartments of the Trianon for a poor cell, and changing the robes of a daughter of France for the coarse drugget of a Carmelite. God alone knows how much this sacrifice weighed in the scales of the sanctuary; but what we know is that it made the deepest impression on the public mind, especially when it was seen continuing for long years with a steadiness and contentment that never flagged.

As a matter of fact, Louisa became the model of the Daughters of St. Teresa and the glory of the Carmelites. Two days after her entrance she received a visit from the princesses her sisters.[1] This first interview presented a most touching scene. The three princesses, while embracing their sister with the tenderest expressions, burst into tears, as well as the whole community, affected by the sight. Madame Louisa, with joy in her heart and serenity on her countenance, strove to console them, set before them some gay projects, and assured them that they had no reason to weep for her, unless they envied her the perfect happiness which she enjoyed.

It was then Easter time, a time at which the Carmelites interrupt their fast. The princesses were curious to be present at their sister's supper, and went to the refectory. The order of the day brought fried potatoes and cold milk there. They saw Madame Louisa joining cheerfully and with a good appetite in this country repast, which at the court had put an end to indigestion for her, and they concluded hence that with her courage and piety she was really less to be pitied than congratulated in her solitude.

Accustomed in the world to wear very high shoes, it was a torment to her to use the low slippers of the Carmelites. Her legs swelled so much that she could scarcely walk. When this was noticed, she was advised to lay her slippers aside. "But," she answered, "I must return to them sooner or later, and hence I desire to put my sufferings over me all at once." The very hard bed used by the inhabitants of Carmel is so narrow, that the princess often struck against the wall, and one day she did this so violently that the result was a contusion of the head. Having occasion to write to the princesses, her sisters, she remarked to them that she had got a lump on her head from coming too roughly against the curtains of the Carmelites. It was thus that, in her good humour, she made light of whatever inconveniences she met with in her new state.

Equally satisfied when she had taken the Carmelite habit, the princess often spoke of her happiness, but never of her sacrifices. If she sometimes compared her past life with that which she was

[1] See her Life by M. Proyart.

leading at Carmel, it was only to prove that she had left little to find much. Behold, how she used to establish a parallel between these two states, so different in themselves!

"Believe me," she would say to her companions, with that tone of candour which carries conviction along with it, "I am truly happy beyond all that I deserve. In a physical, as well as in a moral point of view, I have gained immensely by coming here. It is true that at Versailles I had a good bed, but in that good bed I slept only a broken sleep. I had a well served table, but often no appetite to eat at that table. Here I have only a mattress stuffed with straw for my bed, but on this mattress I sleep amazingly well. Our refectory offers me meagre fare enough, but I go there with an appetite that seasons to perfection whatever is set before me; indeed it is often a scruple to me that I take so much pleasure in eating our pease and carrots.

"As for the peace of the soul, what a difference! It is with the utmost truth that I can say that a single day in the house of the Lord brings me more real contentment than a thousand would bring me in the palace where I dwelt. We have our observances here. The court has its also, but much harder than ours; and, when people live at court, they must, in spite of their repugnances, follow the order of the court exercises. Here, for example, at five in the evening, I go to prayer; at Versailles, somebody would be telling me that it was the hour for the comedy. There is never any rest at court, though the same circle of vain enjoyments goes round and round.

"What beautiful mornings I lost in that land, partly lying in bed after the fatigues, often disagreeable, of the previous night, partly in wearying myself at my toilet, partly in listening to pests! Here, as I sleep at night, I am well able to rise in the morning. The whole of my toilet does not take two minutes. I am employed all the day in a manner agreeable to my mind, because I feel that it is profitable to my soul. Lastly, whatever I met at court promised me pleasure, and yet I tasted none. Here, on the contrary, where everything seems done to sadden nature, I enjoy pure contentment; and, during the year that I have been here, I have daily said to myself, Where, then, are the austerities that it was thought would frighten you?"

If it were not admitted in all ages that virtue and piety are the sources of true happiness, what Madame Louisa here says, after ample experience, would suffice to convince thereof any man not blinded by passion or prejudice.

While Madame Louisa was mistress of novices, one of them, sick for some time, could not make up her mind to take a medicine

that she required. The mistress, after trying in vain all the arguments that she thought most forcible, ended by saying, "I see, my child, that you are not generous. Well, what you have not the courage to do, either for love of yourself or for love of me, or even for love of Him who was drenched with vinegar and gall for our sakes, you are going to see me do, solely to prove to you that medicine is not poison."

While she was speaking, she poured out some of the medicine into a cup. She now drinks it off, and says to the patient, *Here I am!* The latter, surprised and confused, asks for the remainder, takes it, and acknowledges that the sacrifice desired of her is not above human strength; but she feels at the same time that the sight of a great example makes one overcome the greatest difficulties.

It cannot be imagined into what details the good princess descended, when she was superioress of the community. One of her children was excessively timid. Madame Louisa, who knew her failing, had the kindness to accompany her to the various parts of the house where she would not dare to go alone. She did more; she let her put up a bed in her own narrow cell, from which she suffered much during the heat of the summer. Yet never but once did she mention it to the sister, saying as a joke rather than as a reproach, "At all events you would do well to keep your fears for winter, for when there are two of us here we are suffocated."

Distracted one day by many labours, and the numerous cares of her office, Madame Louisa forgot that there was a nun unwell, and that she had not comforted her. This thought breaks on the mind of the good princess in the middle of the night: her heart is disturbed; she cannot taste the sweets of sleep. She rises, goes to her child, and says, "I ought to have visited you yesterday, my dear sister, and it was my intention to do so. I cannot forgive myself this forgetfulness, which perhaps has added to your pains, and I come to make amends for it." Moved even to tears by such extraordinary kindness, the nun did not know how to express her gratitude to her prioress. "No thanks to me," said Madame Louisa, "for what I have done; it is as much for my own ease as for yours. How could I sleep quietly when I recollected that you were not at rest?" She did not leave her until she had restored the calm of her soul.

A sister of the white veil, appointed to wake the community on Easter Sunday at two o'clock in the morning, was very much afraid of missing the hour. Remembering in her embarrassment that her prioress was well able to control sleep, she went to her, told her how great her fears were, and added in a simple way that, all things considered, there was no one in the house on whom she could rely

with so much satisfaction as on her to be waked up at the proper time. She accordingly begged this favour of her. Charmed with so much confidence, Madame Louisa replied, "I am delighted that I can set your mind at rest. Go and take a sound sleep. Depend on me." Next morning, before two o'clock, the lay sister heard her prioress, the daughter of her king, tapping at her door. Such little occurrences, though consecrated by religion, are still among those to which the world itself cannot refuse its admiration.

One day as she was in the infirmary, a nun advised her for the sake of her health to withdraw herself from a particular observance of the Order. "The need that I have of a dispensation," said the princess, then prioress, "does not seem great enough to justify me in desiring it; and, besides, I ought to fear more than anyone else that my example would authorise relaxation in the house." The nun having remarked that she might easily use a dispensation without any person's knowing of it, Madame Louisa reprimanded her, and replied sharply, "Do you then recommend hypocrisy to me? God forbid that I should ever, in presence of Heaven, permit myself an action that would make me fear the eyes of the world! Let us everywhere be what we ought to be; let us nowhere be afraid to appear what we are."

A pious lady remarked to the princess that it was very surprising how, being so delicate in health, and having been brought up as a king's daughter, she had embraced a kind of life so austere as that of the Carmelites. "As for me, Madame," replied Madame Louisa, "nothing surprises me more than your surprise; for you know the Gospel, and you know it offers no special secret to people of delicate health or to the daughters of kings for saving their souls without doing penance." "It is a great mistake," she said on another occasion, "to extol my sacrifice so much. What cost me anything, was not to make it, nor to have made it, but to have been obliged to spend so many years without being able to make it."

During a recreation, Madame Louisa, then prioress, while warning for a second time a nun about her resorting to the parlour, told her that she had to be waiting for her. The nun, whom curiosity to hear the end of a story delayed, answered that it might very well happen sometimes to the mother prioress herself to keep a person waiting. "Yes," answered Madame Louisa, "but our reasons cannot be the same." Such a superioress might be congratulated on her moderation, after opposing only these few simple and true words to the language of disrespect.

But the princess feared that she had yielded to pride, and the next moment she cast herself at the feet of her sisters, kissed the ground, asked pardon for trying to justify herself, and exclaimed,

"I have always been proud; and, after leaving all things, I still find in myself the foolish conceits of self-love." This behaviour may excite the contempt of worldlings, who follow only false principles in regard to points of honour, but it will assuredly be admired by all who understand the excellence and value of Christian humility.

An old nun, commendable for her virtues, and who had preceded Madame Louisa in the office of superiority, submitted for her examination some resolutions that she had made in a retreat. The princess, having read them, returned them to her saying, "There was only one article wanting, but so essential, that I thought it my duty to supply the omission." She had written at the foot of the resolutions, "I will be faithful in warning and reproving our mother about her faults."

Nothing seemed ever to surprise Madame Louisa in the abode of poverty. She who all her life had been clad in soft and costly garments, was content to wear like her companions a chemise of common serge, and her bed sheets were of the same material. Her stockings were of coarse cloth, and her slippers, tied with a string, had no heels. Her habit was of the coarsest grey drugget; she never had more than one. When it was torn, she mended it. During the seventeen years that she was a Carmelite, she used only three, and wore the last for eight years. Nothing showed poverty better than this old habit of the princess, then prioress. She had patched it in several places with new stuff, so that it presented a variety of colours.

A nun, who wanted to make her get a new one, told her that the community would be ashamed if any of the royal family should see her so badly dressed. Madame Louisa reproved this false delicacy, and said, "When, pray, did it become a cause of shame to follow the spirit of our holy state? Does not my family know that I have made a vow of poverty, and that one in my position ought more than any one else to set an example thereof?"

For some time she occupied the gloomiest and most uncomfortable cell in the house. It was proposed that several repairs, which she had judged necessary for all the other nuns, should be made for herself. But she looked on them as useless, and would not let them be made. Her window frames fitted so ill that the wind used to put out her lamp. She, therefore, stopped up the chinks with paper, but had to repeat this operation as often as the windows were opened. At a time when she was sick and confined to bed in the infirmary, it was proposed to her to change into a room where she might receive the royal family; this she firmly refused. Her sisters, the princesses, having come to see her, added their representations

to those of the nuns, and told her that she would be much more comfortable in the other place. "Oh! more comfortable," she answered, "there is no doubt about that. But the most comfortable is not what is sought here; and, in sickness as well as in health we must remember that we are Carmelites."

The princess found all the food set before her delicious; and, fearing that the numerous sacrifices, required of the daughter of a king in a Carmelite refectory, would be too highly valued, she availed herself of every occasion to declare that the pleasure which she took at her meals was a cause of scruples to her. "No," she would often say, "never could the cook at Versailles season a dinner as do fasting and labour here." Hence a good sister, who was connected with the kitchen, thinking that she had acquired, since Madame Louisa's entrance into the house, a talent for her office which no one had ever suspected, said to the nuns, "Do you notice how much this royal stomach relishes our pumpkins? I hope we shall never again hear anybody saying that we know nothing about cookery."

A lay sister had once taken an artichoke that was quite rotten out of the pantry, with the intention of throwing it away; but another sister, not perceiving anything wrong, mixed it up with the rest, and so sent it into the refectory. The cook was expecting that it would be sent back to herself with some reproaches; but, not seeing it return, she concluded that it must have fallen to the prioress. She was not mistaken. Madame Louisa, on receiving the artichoke, noticed its decayed state, and, letting no one else see it, ate it. The cook, greatly afflicted at this accident, went to apologise to the princess, who said to her, "There is no harm done, since it fell to me; but take care that you never serve up the like again, for all the sisters have not as good an appetite as I."

During his stay in Paris, the King of Sweden wished to pay a visit to Madame Louisa, whose heroic sacrifices had excited the admiration of all Europe. On entering her cell, and beholding its furniture—a crucifix, a wooden chair, and a bundle of straw laid on two trestles—Gustavus exclaims, "What! is it here that a daughter of France lives?" "It is here, too," answers Madame Louisa, "that one sleeps better than at Versailles; it is here that one finds the health which you see me have, and which I had nowhere else." She gave him an account of the ordinary diet and occupations of a Carmelite, took him to the refectory, and showed him the place that she held there among her sisters, and the articles set aside for her use, consisting of a wooden spoon, an earthen mug, and a little earthen jug.

Astonished at what he saw, and still more at what he did not

see, as surroundings to a great princess, this King of the North, with sentiments like those of the Queen of the South contemplating the wisdom of Solomon in all his magnificence, could not help admiring the much greater wisdom of her who was able to find her happiness in want and in the contempt of all magnificence. Scarcely could he believe his senses. A witness of the pure and sincere joy and contentment of a princess who daily gave herself up to all the rigours of penance, he exclaimed, "No, Paris and France, Rome and Italy, have shown me nothing to compare with the wonder shut up in the Convent of the Carmelites at St. Denis's."

Meanwhile, Madame Louisa had placed in the scales of the divine justice an immense counterpoise to the crimes of her age. Who knows?—perhaps it was to the heroic virtues of the royal Carmelite that France was indebted for the preservation of that spark of Faith which impiety could not extinguish in waves of blood. Be this as it may, the day of reward was come, and the angel of prayer and expiation quitted this land of exile on the 23rd of December, 1787.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having opposed to the scandals of the world such beautiful examples of virtue Grant us the grace to fear the one and to profit of the other.

I am resolved to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God; and, in testimony of this love, *I will never read doubtful books.*

LESSON LIV.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, *continued.*)

The Church attacked: States General; Constituent Assembly; Suppression of the Religious Orders; Oath of Conformity. The Church defended: Language and Conduct of the Bishops in the National Assembly. The Church attacked: Plunder and Destruction of Holy Places; the Goddess of Reason. The Church defended: Martyrs of the Carmes; the Clergy of Nevers; Pius VI.; Judgment of God on France, on Persecutors, especially on Collot d'Herbois. The Church consoled: Election of Pius VII.; Conversion of Heretics; Progress of Religion in the United States; Mission of Corea. View of Religion since the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

INTRODUCED by the Renaissance and by education into minds and manners, Paganism is about to proceed to open deeds. The French Revolution will only be, as has been said with so much truth, a putting on the stage of collegiate studies. By each of its words,

by each of its acts, it will prove its origin and its genealogy. If, as is pretended, it was the daughter of Luther or Calvin, it would at least once name its father, and invoke his authority. It never does so. On the contrary, it has continually on its lips the names, the words, the examples of the Greeks and the Romans. Even to-day the Revolutionists proudly proclaim their pagan genealogy, saying, "We are the sons of the Revolution, and we are proud of it; but we were the sons of the Renaissance before being the sons of the Revolution."[1] Now the Revolution is Paganism, Satanism returned to the world, with its old undying hatred of Christianity It remains for us to unroll before your eyes the picture of its insolent triumph.

The pagan league, which had sworn to annihilate Christianity, grew stronger day by day. That fanatical admiration of the Greeks and Romans, that impiety, and that libertinism, of which it was the apostle, were become all the fashion. In vain did the Lord beg of France to return to Him. In vain did He announce, by the mouth of His ministers, that terrible punishments would be the reward of her obstinacy. To all these warnings the philosophic gang, spread over the whole kingdom, answered with disdainful laughter, and with that fierce shout which for the first time resounded through the streets of Jerusalem a few hours before the death of Our Lord: *We will not have Him reign over us!*

God, driven out, went away!

Forthwith impiety set to work, and swore to bury in one grave both religion and royalty. In 1789 the States General assembled at Versailles to deliberate on the means of paying the public debts, and remedying some abuses. Paganism, which rules in the Assembly, is not slow to manifest its hatred of Religion. It declares that all ecclesiastical property belongs to the nation. It forbids the reception of novices into religious communities. Ere long it suppresses the Religious Orders, and, that it may destroy them for ever, takes possession of their houses. Now, there were existing at that time in France more than twelve thousand abbeys, convents, priories, and other such houses for religious of both sexes.

These houses, founded gradually by the piety of kings, princes, and private individuals, rendered, as we have seen, the most important services to society. Everywhere, in town and country, they were asylums for virtue and learning. Most of them had some relics of antiquity, literary treasures, or other precious articles. These numerous and admirable establishments, so dear to youth, to the unfortunate, to all classes, disappeared with all that they pos-

[1] This truth, as well as the genealogy of present evils, is demonstrated with the evidence of a geometrical problem in our work *La Révolution.*

sessed! Philosophy, wielding the revolutionary hammer, destroyed in a few moments the work of ages.[1]

The Monastic Order overthrown, impiety attacks the Church itself: when the enemy has destroyed the outer fortifications, he rushes to the very heart of the citadel. The Assembly therefore passed a schismatical act, known under the name of the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy," requiring that all Priests should take an oath of conformity, that is to say, should abjure the Catholic Faith and the submission due to the Holy See.

But God, who was watching from the summit of Heaven over France, the chosen portion of His inheritance, suddenly disconcerted all the projects of impiety. Heroic Confessors of the Faith gave one of the grandest spectacles of which the history of Religion has preserved the memory. The day came when, according to the decree of the National Assembly, all the ecclesiastics that were members thereof should be severally called on to take, in the face of the Legislative Body, the oath of maintaining the civil constitution of the clergy, that is to say, as we have already remarked, of solemnly renouncing the true principles of the Catholic Faith.

Their enemies had left no stone unturned to effect their defeat and secure a victory for themselves. They had taken care to gather round the hall and in the passages a horde of paid miscreants, who, after heaping insults and threats on the faithful Bishops and Priests that attended the Assembly on the day when the oath should be required of them, filled the air with the death-yell, "Away with the Bishops and Priests that will not take the oath!"

Reminded by this signal that it is time to begin the attack, the president rises and takes in his hand the list of unsworn ecclesiastics. The first that he summons to swear is M. De Bonac, Bishop of Agen. "Gentlemen," answers the Prelate, "the sacrifices of fortune cost me little; but there is one which I cannot make, that of your esteem and my faith. I should be only too sure to lose both, if I were to take the oath asked of me." This answer, spoken in a grave and dignified tone, captivates for a moment the admiration, or rather represses the first effects of the rage, of the Left.[2]

The president calls on M. Fournel, of the same Prelate's diocese. "Gentlemen," says this worthy Curé in his turn, "you have pretended to set before us the early ages of Christianity. Well, with all the simplicity of that happy period of the Church, I will tell you that I glory in following the example which my Bishop has just given me. I will walk in his footsteps, as the Deacon Laurence

[1] *Abrégé du Mémorial de la Revol.*, par Jolly, in-12, p. 221.

[2] This was the name given to the members who sat on the left side of the hall, and who had formed a plot to "uncatholicise" France.

walked in those of Sixtus, his Bishop. I will follow him even to martyrdom." On hearing this answer, regret begins to be felt at having afforded the Clergy an opportunity of rendering before the world such a proof of their constancy in the Faith. However, as it is hoped that the same firmness will not be found in all the Priests, the president calls on M. Leclerc, Curé of Cambre, in the diocese of Séez. Leclerc rises, and says, "I was born in the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church. I will die in it. I would not do so if I were to take the oath that you present to me."

The Left wants no more such firm and concise professions of faith. It asks that an end should be put to this nominal appeal. M. Baupoil De Saint-Aulaire, Bishop of Poitiers, fears to lose so fine an opportunity of bearing witness to the Faith, and, with an eagerness that seems to make him throw off the weight of his years, advances to the bench. Here, in the face of the president, he asks to be heard. He then pronounces these words: "Gentlemen, I am seventy years of age, and thirty-five of them I have spent in the episcopate. I will not disgrace my grey hairs by taking the oath of your decrees: I will not swear." All the Clergy of the Right rise, applaud this announcement, and show that they are of the same dispositions.

Vexation and rage are pictured on the faces of the members of the Left. They quit their seats, form into groups, and discuss the means of cloaking their shameful defeat and disparaging the constancy of the Clergy. Inside, the hall resounds with their clamour. Outside, the mob repeats again and again its angry shout, "Away with the Bishops and Priests that will not swear!" These Bishops and Priests, always calm, always immovable, await the resuming of those summonses so important for their Faith. They ask, they press, they solicit that the appeal by name may be continued. Does not this remind us of the challenges of the ancient Confessors to the tyrants of the Primitive Church?

Meanwhile, there comes forth from the noisy deliberations of the Left an advice, which the swearer Gregory is appointed to develop. He harangues the Clergy of the Right, and endeavours to persuade them that it has never been the intention of the Assembly to touch Religion or the spiritual authority, and that, in taking the oath, there is no engagement to anything contrary to the Catholic Faith. "We ask," reply the Bishops and Priests of the Right, "that this explanation may be turned into a decree."

This would have been a means of atoning to some extent for the injuries done Religion; but the dominant party of the Assembly had no such intention. It refuses to confirm the explanation, and asks with loud cries that, instead of calling on the Clergy individually,

one general summons should be given to all, to take the oath. The decree of appeal by name being thus set aside, the president says, "Let all the ecclesiastics that have not yet taken the oath rise and stand forward to take it." Not one rises, not one stands forward!

At the sight of this bold resistance, the Jacobins pass from confusion into a fit of despair, and, in order to have revenge for the shame with which they are covered, straightway decree that the King shall have other Bishops and Curés elected instead of those who have not sworn. But this tyrannical law did not keep those Priests who, without being Jacobins, had thought that they might anticipate the appeal by name, and take the oath with restrictions, from giving up their error and making reparation for it.

Encouraged by the example of their brethren, struck at the obstinate refusal of the Assembly to admit any explanation favourable to Religion, and no longer able to dissemble regarding the fact that open war has been declared, they cannot endure the reproaches of their conscience. Several of them approach the bench, and fearlessly retract an oath which everything at length proves to be that of apostasy. All who have gone astray like them join in the retractation. They wish to lay their declaration on the table: they are repulsed. They insist: they are repulsed again. But next morning the press makes their conversion public.

Thus ended this ever memorable contest, and thus, in presence of a most hostile assembly, and in spite of the threats of a reckless populace, did the college of Bishops and Priests present the sublime spectacle of the most solemn and authentic Profession of Faith of which the annals of the Church have preserved a record. They passed out from the formidable senate amid the insults and shouts of a hired rabble, whose fury could hardly be restrained by numerous guards; but they *went away calm and rejoicing that they had been thought worthy to suffer insults for the name of Jesus Christ.*[1] Their confounded enemies paid to so much firmness at least the tribute of admiration. One of them was forced to exclaim, "We have their money; but they have their honour."

By way of revenge, impiety set itself to plunder and waste the holy places. Under the hammer of these destroyers there fell more than fifty thousand churches, chapels, and oratories. Many other churches were converted into private dwellings, magazines, resorts of stock-jobbers or usurers, stables, theatres, and, often, under the name of "club-houses," dens of profligates and murderers. The bells, crosses, chalices, ciboriums, the sacred vessels and all kinds of

[1] *Act.*, v. 41.

plate, belonging to churches, were broken or stolen by the *Representatives of the People!* From the diocese of Nevers alone, Fouché sent to Paris many packages: at one time, a thousand and ninety-one marks of gold and silver, and at another, seventeen trunks full of gold and silver, taken from churches.[1]

To destroy Christianity was with the Revolution only half its work. Its first religious act was to place an idol of *flesh* on altars, and offer adoration thereto. The world at the feet of Venus! such will always be the end of Paganism, and the certain punishment of those individuals and peoples who withdraw themselves from the empire of the Holy Spirit or of Christianity. Either adore the Most High God or the most low god: there is no medium!

Modern pagans, therefore, were to be seen carrying pompously in a litter, and afterwards placing on the high altar of the metropolitan church of Paris, an actress adorned with garlands of oak leaves, and having in her hand a pike, on her head a red cap, and under her feet a crucifix! There was an order that this frightful, this execrable impiety should be imitated in the cities, towns, and villages of the Republic.[2] Happily France did not with one mind obey this sacrilegious injunction. A great many concealed Priests preserved in families some sparks of the Faith, and upheld the courage of the Faithful.

Impiety turned all its rage against them. Words are powerless to describe the cruelties to which they were subjected: to tell the tale of these unparalleled atrocities would require some new kind of language. Already, in August, 1792, a large number of Priests, arrested in Paris, had been shut up in prisons, or in convents turned into prisons. On the night between the 2nd and 3rd of September, a band of cut-throats, excited by intoxicating drink, are led from the Hotel de Ville to the prisons. Here, with sword and gun at hand, they fall, like tigers thirsting for blood, on the innocent victims delivered to their rage. The massacre continues till the 7th: three Bishops and more than three hundred Priests perish!

Among the number was one of those Prelates who shed most

[1] In the *Moniteur* of the 14th of November, 1793, we read, "A coffer full of crowns—part of the contents of a waggon full of gold and silver, received from the department of Nievre—is drawn by ten men into the hall of the Convention amid general applause and shouts of *Vive la Republique!*"

And the next day, the 15th of November, the same paper says, "The department of Nievre *brings*, for the third time, a rich gift to the country, nine hundred thousand livres in specie and two millions in plate."

[2] The Revolution did not confine itself to the worship of the Goddess of Reason: it raised a temple to Cybele, in the Champs-Elysées, Paris. See our *Histoire de la Révolution.*

lustre on the Church of France by his learning and virtue. This was Monsignor Dulau, Archbishop of Arles, from whom the impious themselves could not withhold their esteem. While he was in the church of the Carmes, with a hundred and twenty other ecclesiastics there imprisoned, awaiting a cruel death, he was often advised to avail himself of the services of his friends, or at least to make some account of his infirmities, in order to be let return home. "No, no," he would answer, "I am only too well here, and in too good company." He was so well satisfied that he not only did not ask the least solace, but if he took advantage of any regard had for his dignity, it was to see that the other prisoners were provided before him with whatever they needed. Up to the third night of his imprisonment he had not been supplied with a bed. It was now impossible to make him accept one, for he had counted the mattresses, and there was one wanting for a new-comer.

The savage guards took pleasure in heaping insults on him, because they had seen him the most exalted in rank, but his patience and piety made him insensible, as it were, to all their ill-treatment. Far from complaining of his sufferings, he thought himself the happiest of all, because he had the most to suffer. On the eve of the 2nd of September, a fierce gendarme came and sat down insolently near the holy Bishop. Then, mixing bitter irony with coarse impiety, he said to him, "What a fine figure you will cut on the guillotine!" He then rose up, made a profound bow, and addressed him in mockery with all his titles that the Assembly had abolished. He added, "My lord, on to-morrow Your Highness will be put to death."

The patient Archbishop disconcerted the impiety of the gendarme by his calmness as well as by his silence. The latter, enraged, lighted a pipe, and sitting down again near the venerable old man, blew the smoke of it into his face. The Prelate was still silent, until, being nearly sickened with the smoke, he was satisfied to change his place. The brutal guard followed him, and desisted from his cruel sport only when he saw his obstinacy itself vanquished by the patience of Monsignor Dulau. This great man was such a master of his soul, was so ready to give it up to God, that at midnight one of the prisoners, disturbed by some supposed noise, and waking him suddenly out of his sleep in order to say to him, "My lord, the assassins are come," he answered calmly, "Well, if the good God asks our life, the sacrifice ought to be made," and after these words he again fell asleep.

When on Sunday, the 2nd of September, the brigands came to do their work on the prisoners, the Archbishop was in the garden of the Carmes, near an oratory, with the Abbé De La Pannonia,

who said to him on seeing the sabres and bayonets, "This time, my lord, I think they have come to slaughter us." "Well, my dear," answered the Archbishop, "if this is the hour of our sacrifice, let us submit, and thank God that we can offer Him our blood in so noble a cause." As he was uttering these words, the assassins came forward crying out, "Where is the Archbishop of Arles?" He waited for them without the least emotion. Having arrived near the group in front of which he was, by the side of Father De La Pannonia, they said to the latter, "Are you the Archbishop of Arles?"

Father Pannonia joins his hands, casts down his eyes, and makes no answer. "Are you then, wretch, the Archbishop of Arles?' they say, turning towards Monsignor Dulau. "Yes, sirs, I am." "Ah! wretch, it was you then that caused so much blood to be shed in the city of Arles!" "I am not aware that I have ever done evil to anybody." "Well, I am going to do it to you," says one of the gang. The next moment he strikes the venerable Archbishop heavily on the head with his sword. The Prelate, unmoved and standing erect before the assassin, receives the first stroke on the forehead, and awaits a second, without uttering a word.

A new miscreant comes up and nearly cleaves open his face. The Prelate, all the while silent, merely puts his two hands to the wound. He is still standing, without having made a single step backwards or forwards, when he is struck a third time. He falls, reaching out one arm to the ground, as if to prevent the violence of his fall. Then one of the murderers, grasping a pike, drives it into the Prelate's breast so violently that it cannot be pulled back. He then lays his foot on the body, and, taking out Monsignor Dulau's watch, holds it up before his accomplices as the reward of his triumph.

Such was the martyrdom of this great Prelate, who, continually sacrificing his tastes to his duties, knew the sweets of society only to deprive himself of them, made no other use of his riches than to relieve the distressed, and found no pleasure but in doing good. You need not be surprised that the Jacobins recommended their emissaries to make him the first victim of their fury. They wanted those men particularly, who, attached to Religion, were as capable of defending it by their talents as of honouring it by their virtues. According to this rule, the Archbishop of Arles deserved a preference.

The Bishops of Saintes and Beauvais soon met the same fate as Monsignor Dulau. They were inhumanly butchered; and, while falling under the strokes of their assassins, congratulated themselves on their happiness in shedding their blood for the Faith. If the

other Bishops of France escaped being slaughtered, it was because they provided against it by flight. But in preferring exile and poverty to the enjoyment of their sees and of a portion of their revenues, which they could have retained only by a betrayal of Religion, they showed that they looked on it as their glory and their duty to prefer death to apostasy.

The persecution, begun in the prisons of Paris, soon extended to the whole capital and the provinces. Among its most revolting acts, acts most likely to draw on our revolutionary impiety the curse of the human race, we must place the murder of the venerable Abbé Fenelon, so justly named the "father of orphans."

The Abbé Fenelon, who of all the members of his family most resembled by his virtues the great Archbishop of Cambrai, won special admiration for himself by his zeal in relieving and instructing the poor known in Paris under the name of "Savoyards." He loved these good people as his own children. He helped them all; but he had a predilection for the youngest, because they had most wants, and were most exposed to danger.

At his house he had all sorts of clothes for these poor children, besides a supply of tools and other things that they often required to earn a living. He would himself distribute these little articles according to each one's needs. His door was always open for them, but he had days and hours fixed when they should assemble, either to let him know their wants, or to give him an account of their conduct, or to receive religious instruction.

When the good Abbé had a number of them well instructed, he fixed on a Sunday when they should make their First Communion. He prepared them for it by a retreat, during which he took care that they were reconciled to God in the tribunal of Penance; and, in order that outward cleanliness might correspond with inward purity, he made them dress in a new suit of clothes. The ceremony came off with much pomp. It was generally a Bishop who, in the morning, gave Communion to these children, and one of the most celebrated preachers in Paris who, in the evening, preached them a sermon, after which they renewed their baptismal vows. All this religious display struck their minds as well as their senses, and left impressions on their hearts that would hardly ever be effaced.

The spirit of zeal and charity that animated the Abbé Fenelon inspired him with a special means of inducing young Savoyards to conduct themselves well. He had a supply of copper medals with an inscription to the effect that they were the reward of wisdom. But this reward should be merited, and no one obtained it till after repeated proofs of docility and good behaviour. The children that wore this medal kept it as a precious jewel. They would sometimes

display it as an ornament, and never failed to produce it when they had need of a recommendation. This medal was known to the police, and was of great weight in favour of any one that possessed it.

The income of the Abbé Fenelon, who had only a little priory, was not enough for all the great works that he wished to do. When his means were exhausted, he used to beg at the court, through the city, and of those wealthy houses with which he was acquainted. It was especially in times of public affliction that he tried this resource. "I have a great many children scattered over Paris," he would say ingenuously to those whose alms he sought, "and I implore your help for this poor and numerous family." In the world he was decreed the honourable title of "Bishop of the Little Savoyards."

It would seem that a man who acted thus as a father to the children of the people should not only be spared, but even protected and cherished, by those who called themselves exclusively the friends of the people; but these impostors soon showed that this friendship of theirs was only a name to hide their wicked designs. Notwithstanding the services which the Abbé Fenelon was continually rendering to the unfortunate orphans of the capital, he was arrested on suspicion at the age of eighty years and lodged in the prison of Luxembourg.

As soon as the news of his arrest spreads, the young Savoyards of Paris, seized with the deepest grief, meet and decide on going in a body to the doors of the National Assembly, that they may claim a restoration to liberty for their benefactor and father. They draw up a petition, in which they agree to use some expressions that their better feelings condemn, but that they judge indispensable to the success of their movement. On the 19th of January they arrive, with their petition in their hands, at the door of the terrible convention. They cannot be refused admission.

One of them, named Firmin, standing forth in the name of all, expresses himself thus:—

"Citizen legislators! Under the reign of *despotism*, the young Savoyards had need of some help in France. A respectable old man became a father to them. The care of our conduct, the first instruments of our industry, our very existence, were for a long time the fruits of his zeal and benevolence. He was a priest and a nobleman. But he was affable and compassionate. He was therefore a *patriot*.

"This man, so dear to our hearts, and we venture to say so dear to humanity, is the citizen Fenelon, aged fourscore years, detained in the prison of Luxembourg, as a measure of public safety. We are far from condemning this measure. We respect the law. The

magistrates are not bound to know this old man as his children know him.

"What we ask, representative citizens! is that it may please this *august* senate to set our father at liberty ON OUR RESPONSIBILITY. There is not one among us that would not be ready to take his place: we would all together offer ourselves even if the law did not stand in our way.

"If, however, legislative citizens! our sensitiveness makes us indiscreet, command that a speedy report may make our father known to you. You will surely applaud his *civil* virtues, and it will be as sweet for his children to have laid them before you as it will be consoling for this good father to receive such a testimony of *your justice* and of our gratitude."

The petition being written, he who has read it lays it on the table, and it is signed, FIRMIN, *in the name of all his comrades*. The Assembly is satisfied to order that it shall be referred to the Committee of General Safety: in other words, to those who desire the death of the Abbé Fenelon. On hearing this hard answer, one of the young Savoyards cries out in dismay, "To the Committee of General Safety! Our father is therefore lost! Citizen legislators! you announced peace to cottages and declared war on castles. Can you not forgive the holy Abbé Fenelon for having been born in a castle, a man who for sixty years has been the benefactor and friend of cottages?"

This cry of filial grief had no effect on the ferocious demagogues.

The alarm increasing more and more, the Abbé Fenelon soon saw that he should prepare to make the sacrifice of his life. He redoubled his fervour, and became a model of resignation for all those who shared his chains. His example touched the other prisoners, and inspired a great many with his own sentiments: he heard their confessions, and disposed them to die well.

One of these little Savoyards, whom the Abbé Fenelon had instructed and assisted, was turnkey of the prison of Luxembourg. Seeing his benefactor among the victims set aside for death, he throws himself, forgetful of what he is doing, into his arms, and holds him fast. "Father, father," he cries out, "what is this? You to go to death, you who never did anything but good!" He continues to press him, hinders him from going forward, and wishes to pull away the hands of the gendarmes that lead him. "Be consoled," says the venerable old man: "death is not an evil for him who can do no good. Your tenderness at this moment is a most sweet recompense for my heart. Adieu, Joseph! Think of me sometimes." "Ah," replies Joseph, "I will never forget you."

And he bursts into tears. In punishment for his filial piety, this young man was deprived of his situation.

Another Savoyard, whom the Abbé Fenelon had instructed and prepared for First Communion, finding himself among the number of persons arrested on suspicion, came also, and threw himself into his arms, exclaiming, "What! my father, you here!" The Abbé, in an affectionate tone, replies, "Do not weep, my child! It is the will of God. Pray for me; and, if I go to Heaven, as I hope to do through the great mercy of God, I promise you that you will have a good protector there."

The Abbé Fenelon was condemned by his bloodthirsty judges on the 28th of June, 1794. Mounted on the fatal waggon with sixty-eight other victims, he exhorted them along the way to detest their sins, to put their trust in God, and to offer up with resignation the sacrifice of their lives. Having reached the foot of the scaffold, he exhorted them to make from their hearts an act of contrition. All having humbly bowed their heads, he pronounced over them the words of absolution. Eye-witnesses declared afterwards that the executioner was so struck by the venerable appearance of the Abbé Fenelon that he bowed like the others. All the prisoners edified the spectators by the resignation with which they met the stroke of death.

Thus died this fine old octogenarian, who had lived only to honour religion by his virtues and humanity by his services, and whose simple but active, obscure but well-filled, life was a new proof that one Priest, animated by the spirit of his state, does more good in a single day than all our modern teachers, so rich in schemes and so proud of their "liberal ideas," during their whole lives.

While the Abbé Fenelon and a great many other Priests were sealing the Faith with their blood on the scaffold, a still greater number were confessing it in loathsome dungeons, to which they had been consigned by revolutionary impiety. It is by thousands that we must count these holy victims. To tell the insults and outrages that they had to endure would be impossible. Never were the prisons of Constantinople or Tunis witnesses of greater horrors. It is questionable if the Early Christians, shut up in the dungeons of Nero and Diocletian, could compare their lot with that of our Modern Martyrs. It is enough to know that impiety, furious at having been unable to overcome the courage of the Priests and obtain a sacrilegious oath from them, had given a fiendish order to its agents *to exhaust their patience*.

Let us hear one of these venerable confessors, the last survivor of many victims,[1] who is going to relate for us himself what he

[1] M. Imbert, Archpriest, Canon, and Curé of the Cathedral of Nevers. Died in 1843

saw and experienced. Though different in circumstances from that of the Priests of Nevers, the treatment of the faithful Priests of the other dioceses of France was substantially the same. Everywhere might be seen, on the one hand, prisons, misery, disgrace for the present, and death in the future; on the other, resignation, angelic meekness, serenity, and even cheerfulness. This private account which we are going to read may therefore be regarded as a general history of the Catholic Clergy of France from 1792 to 1795. The Early Christians used to listen with deep respect to the reading of the Acts of the Martyrs: they derived new courage therefrom. Let us also recollect ourselves to read with profit these lines, traced by a confessor of the Faith on the wet straw of his dungeon:—

"After a detention of fifteen months between the Abbey of Notre-Dame and the Great Seminary, converted into prisons, we learned that an order was issued to send us to Nantes, there to take shipping for Guiana. Our guards and the members of the committee vied with one another in stripping us of our effects. The little that they chose to leave us was carried in the boat that waited for us near the bridge.

"At length the day of our departure arrived: it was the 14th of February, 1794. It had just struck nine o'clock in the morning, when we received the order to clear out. There were forty-eight of us altogether: of whom thirty-two were over sixty years of age. We were chained in pairs, and obliged to pass between two ranks of the National Guard, who heaped all kinds of insults on us. The people gathered in crowds along the street and on the quay. They could not behold without emotion these Priests, most of them white-haired, laden with chains like criminals and led to death for the sole crime of being Priests: many a tear flowed. As I was going down in my turn to the boat, my mother wished to see me for the last time. She offered a sum of money to the jailer's wife that she might obtain this favour, but was refused.

"We were put into an inconvenient boat. Here we met with thirteen Priests brought from other houses of detention in the city, and sentenced like us to transportation: we were in all sixty-one. After recognising one another and casting a look on the city which had witnessed our birth, on the seminary which had served as our sacerdotal cradle, and then on the prison; after saying farewell from the bottom of our hearts to all that was dear to us, we made our sacrifice, and awaited in peace the moment of our departure.

"A large vessel near our boat was mounted by sixteen guards ordered to accompany us, or rather to rob us of the little money that was left to us, and even of our miserable food. The care that we took to appease them, by sharing with them whatever was given

us daily, served only to make them more barbarous. Their conduct reminded us involuntarily of the *ten leopards*, that is to say, the ten Roman soldiers, who escorted St. Ignatius of Antioch to Rome, and we thought ourselves happy in having some resemblance with the illustrious Martyr.

"At length we weighed anchor. The weather was *poor:* a prevailing west wind hindered us from making progress, and for a long time we were able to rest our eyes on the places which we had so often visited, and which most of us should never see again. From the moment of our departure, Providence watched over us in a very remarkable manner. It was the contrary wind that saved our lives. If we had arrived at our journey's end a few days sooner, not one of us would have escaped death.

"When we were come near Orleans, our guards made me get ashore. Their leader, who did not know how to write, obliged me to pen, under his dictation, a letter in which he informed the *Club of Nevers* that the escort had not yet found an opportunity of ridding themselves of us, and that, for the rest, they could not but praise our submission and meekness. If, however, we were not drowned on the passsge, we owed it only to the honesty of the crew that had the task of conveying us.

"Our guards, in order to console themselves for not having yet thrown us into the river, kept continually saying to us, 'We have a right to do away with you, either by cutting your throats or by drowning you; and, if we cannot do it on the way, it will be done at Nantes, where you will no longer have your protectors (*the crew*). It is there that heavy strokes will be given. We hope, however, that it will not be necessary to go so far.' In the midst of these assurances we arrived at Tours.

"We were received here with many insults, as well as at Pont-de-Cé, where the soldiers, called *volunteers*, said on seeing us land, 'Here is something to fatten our scads!' We spent the night in sickening dungeons, with no other food than bread and water. The mob, convinced that we were going to be drowned, came to the air-holes of the prison, and cried out to us, 'Give us your assignats; throw them to us with whatever else you really do not want, for you are going to be drowned.' These threats were not executed.

"On leaving Pont-de-Cé, we could every moment see fettered corpses floating on the water, or lying on the rocks or on the shore. We had this sad sight, auguring so ill, before our eyes from Bouchemaine to Angers, where numerous executions were then taking place. At the same time we began to see, on the left bank of the Loire, the flames rising from the towns and villages of Vendee, to which the republican armies were setting fire.

"It was on the 3rd of March that we disembarked at Angers, in the midst of an angry mob, who mistook us for Vendeans on the way to death. Our guards extorted from us whatever silver or notes remained in our possession, under the pretext that our last hour was come. They swore to us that they would give this money back to us if we returned to the vessel, or remit it to our friends if we perished: we never saw a fraction of it afterwards. Led between two rows of soldiers to the Bishop's residence, where the revolutionary court held its sittings, we were stripped almost naked under the pretext of searching us. We remained there eight hours, a butt for outrages and threats of every kind. A member of the court said to one of the guards in our presence, 'You were a very stupid fellow to bring them here; why did you not slip them down?'

"After our linen, our handkerchiefs, our breviaries, had been taken from us, we were divided into three parties, and led separately into the dungeons of the castle. We remained there eleven days. During this time, the only food that we received was a little bad bread and half a glass of water daily, and our bed was rotten straw. Yet we had among us an old man of fourscore, and thirty sexegenarians, stooped under the weight of their infirmities!

"On the 13th of March, about midnight, we were suddenly dragged out of our dungeons. The guards and crew from Nevers had left us. A man named Marquet, the leader of the new escort that was to accompany us as far as Nantes, caused us to be chained or rather chained us himself two and two. Our escort consisted of fifty soldiers. As soon as we were made fast, he commanded his troop in these barbarously equivocal terms: 'To the river! march!' That moment we were pulled along towards the harbour. We remained from one o'clock till seven in the morning, standing or sitting on rocks, exposed to a piercing wind from the north. During this time, search was being made in the prisons of the city for fifteen septuagenarian Priests of Nevers. They were led down to the boat intended for us. We found ourselves very closely packed here, each of us having scarcely the space of a square foot.

"The soldiers, much better accommodated in a frigate, had turned their cannon against our boat with the intention of sending it to the bottom in case that any attempt should be made from the Vendee side to rescue us. Our resignation amid so many physical sufferings angered the soldiers to such a degree that one of them jumped into the boat, holding in his hand an ivory crucifix which he had taken from us, and with it struck many of us on the face, accompanying this diabolical action with the most horrible blasphemies. To all this ill-treatment we endeavoured to make reply like our Divine Master—by returning good for evil.

"One of the soldiers fell into the Loire, from which he was drawn out benumbed with cold. Immediately one of our companions had the charity to take off his coat and lend it to him until his own would be dry. Doubtless the soldier's heart will be touched: he will make haste to return with thanks the garment that has saved his life. Foolish hope! When on the following day our confrère asked back his *only* coat, he received no answer but insults and a refusal.

"At length, on the 15th of March, we arrived before Nantes. Since leaving Angers, that is to say, for two days, we had been in want of food. Yet we were left in the boat all the day of the 15th perishing of hunger, till nine o'clock in the evening. We were then taken to the neighbourhood of the 'Dry-house,' close to a galiot captured from the Dutch, the hold of which was to be our prison.

"It was necessary that our dear seniors, worn out with fatigue and hunger, should ascend to the deck by a wooden ladder, and descend into their dungeon by a rope one. Some of them having no longer any strength, the soldiers passed ropes under their armpits, and then, after hoisting them up, let them fall heavily into the hold: one of them had his arm broken. Before throwing them into this grave, as it might be termed, the soldiers took possession of nearly all the garments that remained to them.

"Hurried into the galiot in the midst of the thickest darkness, abused, disfigured, exhausted, we groped about for a place where we might seat ourselves. Our apartment was very small; it might at the most accommodate forty passengers in health, and we were seventy-six, nearly all sick. We found nothing for chairs and beds but the keel and some tarred cordage. We soon noticed that we were in water: we thought that our last hour was come. Happily, the water did not increase during the night. There is no mistake in supposing that it was impossible for us to take any rest.

"Besides, there was on deck a guard of soldiers who seemed determined not to let us sleep. After completely closing the hatchway, the only means by which the air in our prison could be changed, they danced most of the night over our heads with affected fury. To their wild stamping, they joined the most obscene songs. They also addressed the grossest insults to us. This frightful tumult added much to the painfulness of our situation; and, when day broke, we were all amazed to find ourselves still alive.

"Yet an innocent cheerfulness, a sweet serenity, beaming on every face, would have led a stranger to suppose that we had suffered nothing, if our paleness and weakness, caused by hunger, had not but too plainly demonstrated the contrary. A new guard, which relieved that of the night, granted us permission to pump the

water out of our dungeon, and seeing that most of us, even those of the hardiest constitutions, were quite languid, helped us in this laborious task. We eventually made the hold somewhat healthy, and assigned ourselves places, giving the best to the sick. The youngest and strongest undertook to serve them. In spite of all this mutual care, the most heartrending sorrows quickly overwhelmed us. Two of our old men expired in our arms the first day. One of them died of starvation; for it was three days since we had received an ounce of bread.

"The second night having come, sleep ought to have come to us with it; but, deprived of any nourishment for so long a time, how could we sleep? A member of the National Guard opened the hatchway to tell us that he would get us some bread, if we gave him twenty-five francs. Hunger making us credulous, we managed, not without difficulty, to scrape together this sum, which we gave him; but the only use that he made of it was to buy wine for himself and his comrades. When they were drunk, they lavished insults on us.

"At daybreak we were obliged to bring on deck the bodies of our two deceased brethren, and a public officer made his appearance, requiring that they should be laid on the bank. There they lay, almost naked, a great part of the day; after which they were removed to the cemetery. It was the same with the many others among us who expired in the galiot.

"We were already eight days without food, when the watchman of the vessel brought us a small piece of meat that had been sent to us by way of alms. It was divided into seventy-two parts, and disposed of in one mouthful, along with the crumbs of stale bread that we were able to gather up in the corners of our pockets. Two old men, having discovered among the cordage some mouldy crusts, softened them in a little water; this was on the ninth day that we were left without food. They ate them, and, poisoned thereby, died in the most violent pain.

"We were now mere skeletons. We had nothing to drink but the water of the Loire, which was so unwholesome and disgusting on account of the multitude of persons drowned lately that the police authorities had forbidden the inhabitants of Nantes to use it. We had not been able to sleep for a moment, and to so many evils were added the most lamentable sights. Nearly every day there were boat-loads of women and children—many of whom were at the breast—brought out before our eyes, and, the following night, all drowned together. Their piteous cries reached us in the depths of our hold, and rent our souls. Next day we could see in the water the remains of these unfortunate victims. The tide coming in

washed frightful heaps of them against our galiot. These women and children were from Vendee.

"The effects of famine appearing violently among us, we were nearly all afflicted with dysentery, accompanied with a fever that bore every mark of incipient putrefaction, and we could not even get warm water to relieve ourselves. It was impossible for us to change our linen, and we had to breathe a mephitic atmosphere, laden with all kinds of diseases.

"On the tenth day at last, after repeated requests to the constituted authorities of Nantes, each of us received half a pound of bad bread and two ounces of rice cooked in water. This was too much for our weak and shrunken stomachs, and yet it did not appear at all sufficient. Four of our number expiated by their death the kind of greediness with which they partook of this wretched allowance. So many deaths occurring among us made the inhabitants of Nantes suppose that the plague was raging in our vessel. The guards refused to render us any service, and we could not obtain a visit from any doctor, nor any medicine. It was forbidden people of the city to walk on the quay of the 'Dry-house,' about five hundred feet distant from the place where we were, in the middle of the Loire.

"However, the ingenious charity of the Nantese succeeded first in sending us secretly a canoe laden with eighty shirts and a quantity of eatables and drinks, among which we found some syrups proper to stay the course of the dysentery. A few days afterwards they sent us in the same manner another supply of linen, blankets, clothes, and whatever else they thought necessary for us. Other private alms were intrusted to the watchman of our galiot; but he kept a large share of them, and out of what he did surrender to us he made us pay him well besides. At length an officer of health came down into our prison, holding a smelling-bottle of strong vinegar to his nose, and he did not conceal from us that we had no help to expect. Yet several of our number were in their agony, and most of the others dangerously ill.

"Between the 16th of March and the 18th of April there died thirty-one of ours—from Nievre; and of the fifteen belonging to Angers there remained only one, whose state was next to hopeless."

After a sojourn of six weeks in the galiot, the survivors were conveyed to Brest. Six died on the passage. Those who outlived it were thrown into a narrow prison, where they were waiting for death when the fall of Robespierre changed the face of affairs, and let them have a glimpse of the possibility of a return to their homes. They did indeed return, but with a train of infirmities that made their life a long series of sufferings.

It was a small matter for impiety to have thinned the holy tribe: to annihilate the priesthood, the head should be destroyed. Armies pass into Italy, enter Rome, and seize the venerable Pontiff, Pius VI. A wicked man penetrates into the palace of the Pope, confined by a serious indisposition, and makes known to him that he is no longer King of Rome, but that the French Republic wishes to offer him a pension.

"Of a pension," answers the Vicar of Jesus Christ, with dignity, "I have no need. A habit of drugget is enough for him whose Master died naked on the cross. I adore the hand of the Almighty, who punishes the pastor for the faults of the flock. You have all power over my body, but my soul you cannot touch. You may destroy the habitations of the living and even the tombs of the dead, but you cannot destroy our holy Religion. It will exist after you and me, as it existed before us, and will continue to the end of ages."

He to whom the Pontiff addressed these noble words was a Calvinist On retiring, he orders the Prelate in the hall in front of the Pontiff's room to go in and tell him to prepare for his departure from Rome, which must take place at six o'clock the next morning. Seeing that the Prelate hesitates to fulfil so cruel a mission, he enters himself and conveys the barbarous intelligence to Pius VI., who cannot help replying, "I am eighty-one years of age, and I have been so sick for the last two months that I believe my last hour is at hand: it is scarcely possible that I shall recover. For the rest, I cannot abandon my people nor my duties. I wish to die here."

The republican answers impatiently, "You will die as well elsewhere; and, if I cannot induce you to set out freely, there will be severe measures taken to compel you to leave."

As soon as he went out, the Pope hastened to renew his strength at the foot of his crucifix in an adjacent room, and, returning to those who attended him, said, "God wills it: let us prepare to suffer whatever His Providence has in store for us."

It was on the night between the 19th and 20th of February, 1798, that the republicans came to carry him off from the Vatican. Pius VI. wished first of all to hear Mass: it was celebrated in his room. But the impatient soldiers are angry at the slowness of the Priest who offers the holy sacrifice. Fearing lest the people may rise up against them, they are most anxious that His Holiness should quit Rome ere the dawn; and with fresh blasphemies they threaten to drag the Pontiff away before the Mass is ended. It is scarcely over when, two hours before day, they tear him from his apartments. As by reason of his age, and of the paralysis which

has been making notable progress with him, he can only go slowly, especially in descending the stairs of the Vatican, the satellites take the liberty of pressing him by words, and even more rudely, to quicken his speed.

At length, after placing the Pontiff in a coach, intended for his domestics, he is eagerly hurried off. Already, on the 22nd of February, he arrives near Lake Bolsena, where there are a number of French Priests wandering about in disguise for the sake of security, some as beggars, and others as soldiers, by the help of uniforms that compassionate French soldiers have given them. Listening no longer to any sentiments but those of gratitude and faith, one of them draws near during a few moments of relay.

Pius VI., who recognises him, and retains in the midst of his sufferings the holy joy of a pure soul, says to him with a smile, "Are you then become a soldier?" "Holy Father," he answers, "we are all soldiers, and will always be the soldiers of Jesus Christ and Pius VI." "To what a sad state you are reduced!" "It is our glory to belong to your suite!" "But where are you going?" "Alas, Holy Father! the sheep follow the steps of the shepherd; and if we cannot always follow you, you will always be accompanied with our wishes for your safety." "Well, keep up your strength and your courage." "Yes, Most Holy Father, we have so great an example before our eyes that we should be very guilty not to imitate it."

The coach whirls off, and the Pope is borne away from their homage. He is left, on the 25th of February, at Sienna, in the Convent of the Augustinians, where he remains till the 25th of May. He has time to breathe here, and one of the Priests whom he has left at Bolsena, the same who has had the happiness of speaking to him, is admitted to see him. He seems uneasy in his sufferings. "I suffer," answers the Holy Father, with St. Paul, "but I am not cast down: *Patior, sed non confundor.*

This Priest envied the happiness of Monsignor Marotti, who, as Secretary for Latin Letters, never separated from the Holy Father. He compared him to St. Jerome, charged in former days with a similar office near Pope Damasus, also persecuted for the Faith. "Yes," answered Pius VI. with the most touching humility, "but Pope Damasus was truly a Saint, and we are only a miserable sinner."

The facilities which the Pope had for communicating with his subjects, and above all the fear that he might take advantage of the proximity of the sea to escape, but less than the occurrence of an earthquake, determined his suspicious persecutors on removing him to a Carthusian monastery, about two miles from Florence. As pious souls knew that he was left without pecuniary resources, and

yet tyranically required to pay the expenses of his journey, they offered him sums of money. His heart was greatly touched by these generous offerings, inspired by a sense of religion; but he was equally satisfied to be able to dispense himself from accepting them, because the munificence of the sovereigns of Europe had felt it due to his dignity as a monarch to provide for all his wants.

Among the marks of consideration which he received at this time, there was one which in several respects formed too striking a contrast with the barbarous conduct of the revolutionists not to be some consolation to him. It was a present of a silver chalice, with its paten, having at the foot of it the arms of France on one side, and a small cross on the other. It was sent to him by the Bey of Tunis, who wrote to him at the same time thus: "Most Holy Father, those perverse French who have robbed you of everything have certainly not left you a chalice, and I beg you to accept that which I regard it as a duty and an honour to offer to you."[1] Would not one be inclined to say that the ashes of St. Cyprian were then exhaling a miraculous perfume of Catholicity along the shores of Carthage, and that Arabs were settled on the banks of the Seine?

The Directory, alarmed at the interest taken in Pius VI., and at the entrance of the Austrian troops into Italy, sent an order to bring him to France. His paralysis was growing worse, and he had much to suffer. Nevertheless, the French agents, regardless of his condition, pulled him away rudely from the monastery, and brought him to an inn at some distance beyond Florence. Here he spent the night. Next morning he was obliged to set out before sunrise.

What new tortures for the holy Pontiff to pass, during the four months that he has yet to travel, through so many villages and towns disturbed by the fever of revolution, and to meet everywhere the standard of rebellion! What rest will he find in the wretched lodgings prepared to receive thirty horsemen and their commander under whose guardianship he is led?

We must, however, in order to do homage to the truth, say that on arriving at Parma the holy Pontiff was somewhat consoled by the respectful kindness of the French Governor of this city, who, following only the dictates of his own heart, merited a most flattering

[1] For details on the authenticity of this fact, see History of Pius VI., by Baldassari, p. 363.

To this fact, so strange, we shall add another no less so, but of more recent date. Mehemet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, having been informed of the burning of St. Paul's Church in Rome, ordered four superb pillars to be cut out of an alabaster quarry, lately discovered, and presented them to the Sovereign Pontiff, that he might help in the reconstruction of the basilica. O the depth of the counsels of God: *O altitudo!*

expression of gratitude from the Pontiff. The health of the Holy Father was sinking day by day. It would seem that no one could have the barbarity to drag him farther, when, at midnight, the captain of the escort made known to him an order to set out in four hours.

This order, conceived in the most threatening terms, was the result of a false alarm about the approach of the Austrians, who, it was supposed, would deliver him. The venerable old man, not suspecting anything, opposes his dangerous condition to the obligation to depart. Physicians are called in to decide the case; and, obliged by the republican captain to lift the bedclothes, in order that he may see naked this sacred body, so cruelly treated, and even bleeding in some places from the application of remedies, they declare that the Pontiff runs the risk of dying on the highway, if again exposed to the fatigues of a journey. The officer leaves the room for a few moments, and, returning with the air of a tyrant, says, "The Pope must go *dead* or *alive!*"

In point of fact, he had to set out very early in the morning for Turin. He hoped that here at least his painful journey would end, and that he should have a convenient lodging; but, finding himself thrown into the citadel, he raised his eyes and hands to Heaven, and adoring the divine will, said, "I will go wherever they wish to take me."

The second day after this, at three o'clock in the morning, he has to leave for Susa; and, in order to carry over the Alps the venerable old man, who hitherto could only be placed in a coach or removed out of it by means of a soft folding-chair, he is seated in a kind of Sedan chair, little better than a barrow. The Prelates, as well as the other persons of his house, will have mules to climb the rocks. It is towards the terrible pass of Mont Genèvre that the course is directed. The Holy Father is borne up the mountain!

For four hours he hangs over a narrow path that lies between a wall of snow eleven feet high and frightful precipices. The Piedmontese hussars offer him their furred cloaks, to save him from the bitter cold that reigns in this elevated region; but the ills of earth have no longer any effect on this heavenly soul. He thanks them, saying, "I am not suffering, and I am afraid of nothing. The hand of the Lord is evidently protecting me amid so many dangers. Let us go on courageously, my children, my friends! Let us put our trust in God!" And it is with these sentiments that he at length enters the French territory.

After seven hours and more of a cruel journey, he reaches Briançon on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 30th of April. Oh, how much this great Pontiff, insensible to pain, is consoled as well as

surprised on seeing so many of the people of Briançon running to him, and, animated by their faith, giving him with a holy enthusiasm the liveliest proofs of their devotion! They are the first to merit this exclamation from the Pontiff: *Verily, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.*[1]

He is lodged at the hospital in a very close and uncomfortable room, and forbidden to appear at a single window, knowing that he is a hostage to the Republic. He is soon made to feel new grief, by being deprived of most of his attendants, who are sent as hostages to Grenoble. There only remain near the Holy Father his confessor, Father Fantini, and his faithful chamberlain, named Morelli, whose removal is no less improbable. But the success of the Austrians in Italy causing the Directory to fear that they will come and carry off the Pope from Briançon, an order is issued to take him to Grenoble. And the Vicar of Jesus Christ is borne away, in a very plain conveyance indeed, having by his side the only two consolers who are left to him!

The homage which the people of Grenoble showed to him during the three days that he spent among them cannot be expressed. They all gathered round him when he was leaving for Valence, where he arrived on the 14th of July. On drawing near this town, the Holy Father saw, as he had seen so often elsewhere along his way, a multitude of the Faithful eager to ask his blessing: an admirable and consoling contrast to the conduct of those fierce republicans who, the previous year, on the anniversary of the first terrible triumph of the Revolution, had burned with many other portraits that of Pius VI., even in Valence!

The Pontiff was taken to the house of the governor, whose garden overlooked the Rhone; but this was enclosed within the walls of the citadel, and the central authorities of the department of Drôme, sitting in the town, declared by a public act that he was under arrest here. They enjoined on persons of his suite not to do or say anything outside *that might maintain fanaticism.*

All communication was expressly forbidden between the grounds of the mansion and those of the Convent of the Cordeliers, in which there were imprisoned thirty-two faithful Priests, most of whom had experienced the kindness of the Pope during the period of their detention in Italy They, on their side, received a most strict prohibition not to be trying to see their august and saintly benefactor to whom it was even forbidden to leave the enclosure of the garden, lest, as was said, this might give rise to meetings and troubles. No person could go near him without a written permission, in granting which the administration was very sparing.

[1] Matth., viii, 10.

Meanwhile, the Directory of the French Republic had become more moderate; for, out of the five members composing it, the three who were most furious against the Pope had been obliged to give place to more humane men. One no longer saw sitting therefore Treilhard, or Merlin (of Douay), or worst of all that Laréveillère Lépeaux who, by violent means as well as by subsidising some of the vilest revolutionists, tried to establish his absurd religion called Theophilanthropy.

The Directory, thus reformed, sent only moderate orders and instructions to the Commissioners whom it had appointed in all the administrations. The government commissioner near the department of Drôme congratulated himself on not receiving any contrary to the sentiments of respect with which the virtues, the age, and the sad position of the Sovereign Pontiff had filled him. But all the administrators, one alone excepted, retaining the strong anti-Catholic spirit of Laréveillère, prevailed over the government magistrate, and continued to torment Pius VI. till he sank into the tomb.

The new successes of the Austrian and Russian armies in Italy had brought them near the summit of the southern chain of the Alps. The terrified Directory imagined that it could see them descending on Valence. Fear leading on to cruelty, it ordered that the Pope should be transferred to Dijon: this being well understood, it added, that "the journey shall be made at his own expense." It even expressly forbade that any stay should be made at Lyons, a city renowned for its devotedness to the Holy See. When the order arrived, the obstacles that the infirmities of the Holy Father placed in the way of his removal were insurmountable; and he himself had no doubt of his approaching end.

At the sight of the tomb opening before him, that pastoral solicitude for all the churches with which he has always been animated, does not forsake him. "My corporal sufferings are nothing," he says, "in comparison with the pains of my heart. . . . The Cardinals and Bishops dispersed! . . . Rome, my people! . . . The Church! ah, the Church! . . . This is what torments me day and night. In what a state I am going to leave all!"

He spends some days almost entirely in prayer. Even during the night, he can be heard reciting psalms, and applying them fervently to his present state. On the 20th of August, he is seized with vomitings and other symptoms no less serious, which too plainly tell of the progress of his paralysis. He calls for his confessor, and it is decided to administer the Holy Viaticum to him the next day. Pius VI., unwilling to receive it otherwise than with all the marks of respect in his power, requires to be helped out of bed, and clothed with his soutane, rochet, camail, and stole. Bitterly regret-

ting his inability to kneel or to stand while receiving his God, he consents to communicate sitting in an arm-chair.

The Holy Eucharist being brought to him by the Archbishop of Corinth, this Prelate thinks it a duty to ask him before all, when presenting to him the Body of Jesus Christ, if he forgives his enemies. "Oh, yes, with all my heart, with all my heart!" answers immediately the Holy Pontiff, raising his eyes to Heaven, and bringing them back to a crucifix which he holds in his hands. His "Chapel-Master" reads in a loud voice the Profession of Faith given down in the Pontifical; and Pius VI., as if he were receiving new strength from his own faith, manifests his adhesion thereto in a manner better than by words: he lays one hand on the Holy Gospels and the other on his breast. At length, he communicates in an angelic manner, and all present are moved to tears.

The next day, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Archbishop of Corinth judges that he should not defer administering to the venerable sick man the Sacrament of the Dying. And, with a tender piety, the Holy Father joins in the prayer which accompanies each of the anointings. After an hour's recollection, he dictates and signs a codicil by which he makes some special grants in favour of those who serve him. He intrusts its execution to the same Archbishop, whom he also charges to watch over the clauses of his will relating to the place and circumstances of his burial.

Freed from every care foreign to the salvation of his soul, his only occupation henceforth is to offer to God the sacrifice of his life. His frequent aspirations only express his impatience to be reunited to Jesus Christ. In the interval, he recites the *Miserere* and the *De Profundis*. He often repeats these words of the Ambrosian hymn, so proper to maintain his confidence in God: *Te ergo quæsumus famulis tuis subveni quos pretioso sanguine redimisti*, We beseech Thee, therefore, O Lord, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood; and *In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum*, O my God, since I have placed my hopes in Thee, I shall never be confounded!

His prayers are so continuous during the rest of the day, that it is thought necessary to prevail on him to moderate his fervour, lest his illness may increase. It succeeds, however, in exhausting his strength, though it leaves him perfectly conscious. He avails himself of this calm to offer affectionately his paternal hand to all those of his suite who go near his bed; and, taking theirs, presses it tenderly in order to express how sensible he is of their devotedness and grateful for their care.

About midnight new symptoms inform him, as well as the atten-

dants that he is soon to draw his last breath. The Archbishop begins to recite the prayers for the agonising. Pius VI., who wishes to follow them with due attention and an affectionate piety asks him by a sign to say them slowly. Inwardly repeating every word, he takes up in some manner the thoughts. The prayers were still going on when the Holy Pontiff's soul fell sweetly asleep in the bosom of God, an hour and twenty-five minutes after midnight, the 19th of August, 1799. He was then eighty-one years, eight months, and two days old.

Never did the death of a Roman Pontiff cause so great a sensation, and never perhaps did a Pope, on leaving this land of exile, receive so many tributes of regret, love, and veneration. In Italy, in Spain, in Germany, in France even, in every region, Pius VI. was celebrated as a martyr. Even Petersburg and London heard his praises. Among our separated brethren, some splendid conversions were the fruits of this glorious death.

Geneva itself was moved, and one of its most distinguished citizens wrote these remarkable words: "The Roman Catholic will glory in the memorable victory won by his chief over impiety, and Christians of other denominations will see clearly where the true Church is to be found. So many tribulations, reserved for the Pastors of the Roman Church alone, will show that a religion whose ministers give no offence to the apostles of impiety and infidelity is not safe, and that error, when it openly fraternises with vice, must not be let have its way. These, I hope, will be the fruits of the outrages committed against the Pope, during his life and after his death."[1]

The great victim was sacrificed. The waves of impiety, after extending their ravages far and wide, had touched, like those of the ocean, the barrier raised by the divine hand. Already a triumph is preparing for the Church by the miraculous election of a new Pontiff, and the justification of Providence is appearing in the punishment of the guilty.

France dared to say to the Lamb that rules the world, *We will not have Thee reign over us!* Men are drunk with the blood of martyrs; and the hand of God weighs heavy on France and on persecutors. A frightful hurricane rises. France is shaken to its foundations: monuments, riches, citizens, all perish! For ten years the history of this kingdom, formerly Most Christian, but now rebellious to Jesus Christ, is written with a sword dipped in blood. Never have the generations of men beheld so sad a sight. The great culprits who have driven France on to rebellion do not escape the strokes of the divine vengeance: one is devoured by dogs; another

[1] See Baldassari, p. 557.

dies in extreme misery; many lay their heads on the scaffold; others drag out, in exile, a dishonoured life![1] He who has added sacrilegious mockery to cruelty—Collot d'Herbois—frightens the very negroes by the horrors of his death. Let us give a short account of it: a warning to persecutors!

Collot d'Herbois, a furious atheist and leading revolutionist, was intimately associated with Robespierre, whom he aided in his detestable schemes. He was the chief author of the massacres of Lyons. Sent to this unfortunate city in 1793, he put to death by the hand of the executioner, by guns, or by cannons, sixteen hundred victims, whose only crime was to have wished to shake off the yoke of tyranny. But the arm of the Lord was not slow to fall on him. The Convention, afraid to resist public opinion, which had strongly declared against this monster, ordered his arrest on the 2nd of March, 1795, and afterwards his transportation to Cayenne, where he was abhorred not only by the whites, but also by the blacks, who in their own language called him "the destroyer of the religion of mankind."

An eye-witness of his conduct there tells us that he used often to exclaim, *I am punished: this abandonment is a hell!* In the midst of these regrets, a violent fever attacked him: he called God and the Blessed Virgin to his aid. A soldier to whom he had preached atheism asked him why he had mocked them a few months previously. *Ah, my friend!* he answered, *my mouth was imposing on my heart.* He then went on: *My God, my God! can I yet hope for pardon? Send me a consoler, send me some one to turn away my eyes from the fire that consumes me. My God! grant me peace.* The sight of his last moments was so dreadful that he had to be put in a retired place. While search was being made for a Priest, he expired on the 9th of June, 1797, his eyes half open, his limbs twisted, blood and froth flowing from his mouth. The negroes, eager to go to a dance, gave him a very imperfect burial: his body became the food of unclean animals. . . .

After justifying Providence by teaching the world that neither men nor empires, no matter what they are, can despise the Lamb with impunity, and that as often as the deicidal cry of the Jews is heard from a nation, a storm of punishments bursts upon it and leaves it a monument to the eternal justice, God consoled the Church by giving her new children instead of those who had rendered themselves unworthy of her benefits.

[1] Of the Presidents of the National Convention, to the number of sixty-three, sixteen were guillotined, three committed suicide, eight were transported, six were imprisoned for life, four became idiots or died at Bicêtre, and only two escaped free of all condemnation.

First, He miraculously restored her visible head. When impiety seemed to sit triumphant on the ruins of broken crosses, an infidel said, with a kind of taunting glee, "Take good care of your present Pope: look after him well, and embalm him when he dies; for I tell you, and you may be sure of it, that after his death you shall never have another."[1] Never was the lie given more plainly or more promptly to such a prediction!

God takes by the hand the young General Bonaparte, the conqueror of Italy, and flings him over to the East. Scarcely is he gone, when Providence calls from the North the liberators of the South. The Russians and English march on Italy, drive out the French, and give the scattered Cardinals time to meet for the election of a new Pope. That this event may bear the characteristics of supernatural interference, God chooses the hereditary protector of the Greek Church to be the defender of the Roman Church.

It is the Czar that he employs to change the face of Italy, and to remove every obstacle in the way of a new conclave assembling quietly, regularly, and without the least pretext for division. Venice has the happiness and glory of giving a welcome to the sacred college: its members meet here. All desires are fulfilled. Pius VII. is proclaimed; and the Church has a head worthy to repair her evils and to heal her wounds. Thus did Divine Providence strengthen the foundations of the Catholic Religion, by not letting the succession of Roman Pontiffs be interrupted or a schismatical religion rend Catholicity.

The election of a new Pontiff was not the only consolation that the Man-God gave His dearly beloved Spouse. While some of the holy tribe were doing honour to her by their constancy under the axe of the executioner, the rest were making her known and respected in heretical countries. Forty thousand French Priests had quitted all rather than renounce Religion. Go, ye illustrious proscribed! Heaven calls you to a new apostleship: you shall be the instruments of a new miracle that will confound impiety!

Glorious Confessors of the Roman Faith, our Bishops and Priests are to be met with in all parts of Europe. The character of the persecution of which they are the victims, their learning, their zeal, their charity, and their purity of intention, make the old prejudices that have so long divided the fold of the Saviour fall to the ground. They speak, and innumerable conversions crown their words. This movement spreads, and princes, scholars, men of all classes, return to the pale of the Church; and henceforth, children full of respect

[1] Barruel relates in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme* that this remark was made even to the Secretary of the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris, by the apostate Cerrutti, then editor of the *Feuille Villageoise*.

and piety, they vie with one another in wiping away the tears of the august Spouse of Jesus Christ, Never—how admirable!—were conversions more frequent among the separated communions than at this period.

Thus the terrible storm of the French Revolution, which, in the minds of the wicked, was to annihilate the Church, proved, in the counsels of Providence, only a favourable breeze that carried the evangelical seed to distant lands, where it has since borne fruit a hundred-fold.

This is not all. America stretched out her arms to the Roman Church. The Protestant government of the United States asked for Bishops, and the most remote nations of the East, stirred at the name of Jesus Christ, fell on their knees before the cross. In point of fact, at the very moment when triumphant impiety was endeavouring to extinguish the torch of the Gospel in the blood of French Priests, Providence had it carried to a land where it had never before been seen: this was Corea.

Corea is a peninsula of about the same extent as Italy. It is connected with China, and is separated from Japan by an arm of the sea some ninety miles wide. Christianity was introduced thus. In 1784, there arrived at Pekin, the capital of China, a young man named Ly, the son of an ambassador of the King of Corea. This young man, a great lover of mathematics, applied to the European Missionaries for some books and lessons on this science. The Missionaries availed themselves of the opportunity to lend him also some books on religion. Grace acted on his heart: he was converted, and was baptised under the name of *Peter*.

Having returned to his own country, the new disciple of Jesus Christ acquainted his relatives and friends with the principles of the true Faith. He distributed among them the books which he had received. This reading, together with the earnest preaching of the neophyte, soon brought a multitude of the Coreans to the knowledge of the true God. He baptised many of them; and many others were baptised by the new Christians whom he had appointed catechists. In the space of five years the number of Christians rose to about four thousand.

The propagation of the new religion could not be long hidden from the King of Corea, and he made many arrests. But in all ages and climes persecution invariably increases the number and fervour of Christians. Among the arrested Christians were two brothers named Paul and James. Questioned by the governor, they confessed Jesus Christ with a noble sincerity. Paul demonstrated the truth of religion. His words astonished the pagans, and set the judges in a rage.

The king was written to. He ordered that a careful search should be made for all Christians, and that, when found, they should be put in prison and not allowed to depart until they had renounced their religion, by word or in writing. As for the two brothers, he had them brought forth, and questioned again. In reply to all the inquiries made of them, they answered, "We profess the Christian Religion, because we have perceived its truth; we wish to live and die Christians, according as God pleases."

This short but very forcible answer displeased the court. It ordered that the two brothers should be put to the torture, until they had renounced Jesus Christ. Amid their sufferings, the two athletes only became more steadfast in the Faith. Kindnesses were next tried All was useless. Then the judge pronounced sentence of death on them According to the custom of the kingdom, this sentence was presented to the king in order to be confirmed. He was struck sad. Knowing the genius and admirable character of Paul, for whose family he had a great regard, he sent some persons to the prison to exhort the two brothers to renounce Christianity. It was in vain. Angered by this resistance, the king commanded that the law should take its course.

The generous Confessors were immediately removed from the prison to the place of execution, followed by an immense crowd of Pagans and Christians. James, half dead under the cruel tortures that he had been subjected to, could scarcely pronounce now and again the holy names of Jesus and Mary. But Paul went forward with an air of gladness to death: he seemed going to a splendid banquet. He spoke of Jesus Christ with so much dignity that the Christians, and even the Pagans, were out of themselves with admiration.

At the place of execution, they are again asked if they are willing to renounce their Faith. On their replying in the negative, the officer commands Paul to read his own sentence of death. Paul takes it up, and reads it in a loud voice. Full of a heavenly joy, he has no sooner read it than he lays his head on a large wooden block, pronounces repeatedly the names of Jesus and Mary, and with great coolness makes a sign to the executioner to do his duty. The executioner cuts off his head, as well as that of James, who, though half dead, has still strength enough to pronounce the holy names after his brother.

The bodies of the Martyrs remained nine days without burial. On the ninth day, the relatives, who had obtained permission from the king to bury them, and the friends who came to the funeral, were greatly surprised to find the two bodies without any signs of corruption, vermilion-coloured, and as flexible as if they had been

beheaded that very day. Their surprise was increased when they saw the fatal block still wet with blood as fresh as if it had been only a moment out of the veins.

The Pagans complained very much against the injustice of the judges, and proclaimed the innocence of the two brothers. Some, touched by the miracle, which they had carefully examined, were converted to the Faith. The Faithful blessed the Lord, and the blood of these two Martyrs was a seed of Christians.

In 1800, a persecution more terrible than the first was kindled in Corea. The only Missionary there was taken and put to death. But he left behind him a great many fervent and pious neophytes, some of whom lately came over to China, asking new apostles and promising an abundant harvest. Several Missionaries have just entered this kingdom. May God bless their devotedness, and the fervour of the Corean Christians![1]

It does not enter into the plan of the Catechism to continue the history of Religion during the nineteenth century. Let us content ourselves with casting a rapid glance over the years that separate 1799 from 1840. This picture, like that which we have given in Lesson XLVIII., will, by showing the Roman Church full of energetic life at the supreme moments when its enemies are proclaiming its defeat, be a victorious answer to their death-cries, and make all Catholic hearts thrill with Faith, Hope, and Love.

I see this Church, after the death of the Pontiff, who, as impiety declared, was to be the last, coming as it were to life again with the glorious Pius VII., miraculously elected at Venice. After that frightful storm which, according to the prediction of her enemies, would sweep away her very name, she returns to France, poor in the goods of this world, but rich in virtues and bright with the stigmas of martyrdom. One of her hands she employs to fight, with the calmness and firmness of justice, against the giant who, after throwing down at his feet so many royal crowns, thinks of placing on his head the tiara of the Pontiffs. The other gathers up one by one the scattered stones of the sanctuary, and, in spite of the opposition of temporal powers, in spite of the sneers of impiety, she raises again with unwearied courage the walls of the Holy Jerusalem.

I see her, after a contest of ten years—delivered by her Divine Spouse, who has armed in her cause both men and the elements—

[1] No 93 of the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith" contains an account of the new persecution that burst over Corea, and examples of faith and courage, worthy of the early ages, given by the neophytes.—A very cruel persecution has occurred recently in Corea See "Annals" for the years 1865-6.

taking again in triumph the road to the Eternal City, while her persecutor is gone, captive and despoiled, to end his days on a lonely rock in the midst of the ocean!

I next see her healing her wounds; setting in order once more the ranks of her militia, thinned by the axe of impiety; and opposing gentleness, charity, and prayer to the endless outrages of her enemies. Then, God blessing her tears, I see innumerable wonders wrought as if by magic at her word, and covering the soil of France. Thirty thousand churches repaired or built; ten thousand schools and hospitals; fifty thousand Priests; a hundred thousand Religious, men and women; the most austere of all Orders, that of La Trappe, more numerous than ever; more than twenty millions of good books published; an unexampled activity in regard to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy: such is the amazing sight that meets the eyes of all, and is the consolation of Faith as well as the anguish of impiety!

In other countries, she shows herself no less active or fruitful. In Prussia and Russia, she opposes to enthroned heresy and schism the firmness of her Pontiffs, and draws shouts of admiration from her persecutors until such times as she can induce them to let the weapons fall from their hands. In Great Britain, she bursts the chains riveted for three centuries on the hands and feet of Faithful Ireland; saps the foundations of a most oppressive system of Protestantism; and, after a few years, brings back two million sheep to the fold. Bishoprics are established in the very metropolis of error, and, in the blood-stained dominions of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, there are built more than six hundred churches.

If from Europe we turn our eyes to the rest of the world, we behold this immortal Church displaying an activity and power likewise unexampled. Between her and error with its hundred voices and hundred arms, the conflict has become more fierce: at no distant period, the whole world must, as in the early days of Christianity, be the prize of the conqueror. What part of the earth has not seen the married missionaries of Anglicanism, the hired hawkers of biblical societies, taking the lead in winning to error the new peoples whom the progress of navigation brings to light every day in the bosom of the sea?[1] It is Simon the Magician going before Peter to Rome!

[1] The Anglican missionary receives an allowance of about two hundred and forty pounds for himself, forty pounds for his wife, and twenty pounds for each child under age. If money and bibles were enough to work conversions, the world would now be Protestant. But see what barrenness! One of these pretended apostles lately acknowledged that the Anglican mission of Macao had, in the space of twenty years and after an expense of some twenty thousand pounds, converted as many as seven Chinese, including the servants of his own house!

But the Catholic Church does not lag behind. We see her spreading far and near that spirit of fire which descended on her in the Upper Chamber. We see her pointing out to her Missionaries the distant nations which must be snatched from error; and Angels of Peace, borne on the wings of the wind, hasten to the four corners of the earth, to-day the Apostles of the good seed and to-morrow its Martyrs. A wonderful thing: if the eighteen centuries that have gone before us do not offer us the constant repetition of the same prodigy, it is at the moment when impiety proclaims in Europe the death of this undying Church that she displays a superabundance of life and stretches out her empire to the farthest limits of the world!

Name any point of the globe, name any island lost in the far off seas, that has not lately received a visit from one of her Missionaries. On what distant or terrible shore have they been afraid to tell her greatness, or to shed their blood for her sake? All honour to their zeal! From the snowy mountains of North America to the burning plains of the Ganges, from Corea to the most distant islands of Oceania, from Tibet to the Cape of Good Hope, the tree of life, planted on the summit of Mount Calvary, extends its beneficent branches, and presents to all the tribes of the human race its imperishable fruits.

A still more wonderful thing: it is on the morning after a revolution as quick as lightning and as dreadful as thunder, a revolution which in three days has overturned three generations of kings, and buried under its blood-stained ruins the ancient throne of St. Louis, regarded as an indispensable footstool for the Church; it is on the morning after—no, but on the very day of—the culmination of these woes that the zeal of the Apostolate is revived in the holy tribe with an ardour quite new! While, from 1815 to 1830, the Seminary for Foreign Missions sent out only forty-six apostles to infidel nations, it despatches seventy-six from 1830 to 1839. While the Congregation of St. Lazarus counted only seven departures between 1815 and 1830, it beholds more than forty between 1830 and 1839. From this period the number goes on increasing. That no people may be forgotten, two Religious Orders are established to evangelise the newly discovered lands. Eastern and Western Oceania become the vast field in which is exercised the zeal of the Congregations of Picpus and Mary.

There was a circumstance whose appropriateness, adding also to the marvellous in apostolic enthusiasm, rendered visible that Providence which watches day and night over the Church. When, in 1830, the French Government withdrew from the missions its support, and the alms which the Most Christian Kings had always granted to them, and, in consequence of this measure, there was a

thought entertained of closing the Seminary for Foreign Missions, lo! a work altogether French, the work of the Propagation of the Faith, previously like the grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds, suddenly took an astounding and unaccountable growth. The Catholics of France first, and then those of the rest of Europe, seized with the spirit of the Apostolate, unite their prayers and their alms to bring help to the missions, and to secure victory for the Church in the battle that is waged between truth and error at all points of the globe. The sum of their annual offerings rises rapidly from a few thousand to five million francs.

In this unexpected movement women themselves take part. The spirit of the Apostolate descends on them; and, what was never seen before, the Virgins of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding their natural weakness and timidity, become Apostles. Like the Missionaries, they leave their families and their homes, brave dangers, disregard climates, and complete the evangelical work by doing for persons of their own sex what the Missionaries do for men. Thanks to this concurrence with Providence, THIRTY-EIGHT French and other Orders or Congregations, devoted to missions beyond the seas, are able to continue their labours! The fate of old Christian regions is secured. We may even form new ones, double the number of evangelical labourers, build churches, found seminaries, ransom captives for the Faith, and let the sun of grace shine on every place visited by the sun of nature. So successful are we that, at the present day, the Roman Church counts outside Europe, in countries where not long ago her name was hardly known, a hundred and twenty Bishops and five million neophytes. If you add hereto the old Catholic populations of the four quarters of the world, you will have altogether on the side of Catholicity eight hundred Bishops—not counting coadjutors, suffragans, and other prelates—and a hundred and eighty million disciples!

She is not dead, then, as impiety would have it, that old Roman Church which still lays her Creed on so many millions of minds, and which daily extends her empire by magnificent conquests. See! while the wolf and the eagle, bloody images of ancient Rome, are met on the banks of the Euphrates and the Danube with a desperate resistance, Modern Rome carries her peaceful symbols, the lamb and the dove, to the borders of the Ganges and the Mississippi, and yet farther, over unknown lands and among nameless peoples!

She is not dead, that Roman Church which, to-day, as in the days of her youth, has still in her heart a charity as large as the world, and in her veins blood enough to shed in every part of the world—a generous blood, which, far from weakening her, becomes the blessed seed of new Christians!

She is not dead, that Church whose word calls forth from barbarism the most degraded tribes of the human species, and seats them at the banquet of civilisation, while her mighty hand raises up schools, convents, and hospitals in idolatrous countries, where children are nonentities, women are slaves, and the poor are an impure caste!

She is not dead, that Church whose light alone makes the difference between civilisation and barbarism. Cast your eyes over the globe: wherever the torch of Christianity shines, there is light; wherever it does not shine, there is darkness. Hence, as regards intelligence, Oceania is below zero, Africa is nowhere, and Asia is dead. There is no intellectual life but in Europe and America, that is to say, among Christianised human beings.

This geographical distribution of intelligence not only supplies a triumphant answer to the war-cries of impiety, but also settles by itself alone all the great questions of Religion, of the Church, of philosophy, and of history. It is geographically demonstrated that human intelligence is Christian intelligence, that human reason is Christian reason; and, if you ask history whence came, or whence come, those floods of light which it describes, it will point out for you without a moment's hesitation the loved hills of the Eternal City.

She is not dead then, ye erring men, that Church, your Mother and mine, the source to which you are indebted for all your intellectual and social life. I know it, the decay of faith—the apostasy of nations, families, and individuals—the rebellion growing more and more general against the Church, is a lamentable fact that daily brings new evils on Europe. But beware of saying, for all that, that the word of the Catholic Church is cold and lifeless. You do not see that you are accusing yourselves.

Is this word cold and lifeless? How do you know: have you heard it, have you felt it, have you studied it? Can this word then oblige the blind to see, or the deaf to hear? If during three centuries it has been insulted, calumniated, parodied, ridiculed, is it to blame for your no longer understanding it, your no longer loving it? Why does it not make on you the same impression that it made of old on so many noble minds and generous hearts? Are you quite sure that it is Catholicity that is dead, and not yourself? Are you quite sure that it is the sun that has ceased to shine, and not your eyes that have been struck with blindness?

What I know is that when man becomes flesh, the Spirit of God departs from him, the lamp of life goes out. Read again certain pages of your history, certain pages of the history of the peoples and individuals who now proclaim the death of Catholicity, and perhaps you will there find the explanation of this mystery. And

you be not yet satisfied, go and ask the whole world for enlightenment on your doubts. Go and question all those nations, all those statistics, all those facts, which I have just set before you.

If then, in regard to society, activity and influence are signs of life, the Roman Church lives, and lives, not like human institutions, with a local life, but with a universal, and consequently a divine life. In effect, consider those newly believing multitudes of Catholics scattered over the earth: four hundred thousand Negroes; two hundred thousand American Indians; three hundred and twenty thousand Chinese; four hundred and fifty thousand Annamites; eight hundred thousand Hindoos; two hundred thousand English colonists; a million two hundred thousand citizens of the United States—and, if you can, refuse to acknowledge the universality, and consequently the divinity, of a religion which prevails in every clime, in every variety of race, in every degree of intellectual development, in all social institutions, a religion consequently independent of those conditions of time and place which are necessary for all human creations.[1]

Hail, then, immortal Church! how grand is the view that unfolds itself before thee! Hail, beloved Mother, who didst smile upon my cradle and wilt stand by my grave! the arm of thy Divine Spouse is not shortened! As thou didst begin and hast continued, thou wilt accomplish thy beneficent mission in the midst of battles![2] The crown of thorns, the untransferable diadem of the lawful Spouse of the God of Calvary, will ever adorn thy virginal brow, and the divine torch which was placed in thy sacred hands will never be extinguished: I am sure of it.[3]

[1] See "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," n. 71, p. 350.

[2] Sanguine fundata est Ecclesia, sanguine crevit, sanguine succrescit, sanguine finis erit.

[3] We cannot complete this picture of the Church better than by quoting the eloquent words which M. Apirisi addressed in 1865 to the Spanish Cortes:—

"There is, gentlemen, an institution that is the work of God; if it were not the work of God, men, on seeing it so great, so magnificent, so excellent, would never take it to be their work. It is the Catholic Church, which was born in the catacombs and rose thence to the throne of the Cæsars, in order to spread her light over the world, buried in darkness. The Catholic Church has come down to us through the centuries, crowned with glory or with thorns, but always preserving the sacred deposit of the Faith. Around her everything grows old, and she is always young, because she is immortal. Around her everything changes, and she is always the same, because she is true. At the head of this Church is a man, and this man sits on the loftiest throne in the world: he is the first among all men. And when he ascends to this sublime position, it is not by right of blood, it is not by the strength of the sword: he rises from the middle classes, sometimes from the humblest classes, of society. What raises him to this sublime position is learning and virtue, in order to show the world that learning and virtue are

Will it always shine on my native land? I hope so. Oh, no, my God! Thou wilt not take away the Faith from the Eldest Daughter of the Church; from her whom Thou hast so evidently created and placed in the world to be the joy, the strength, the voice of her mother; from her who, notwithstanding her infidelities, still leads towards Catholicity all the other peoples of the earth, as the sun draws on their course all the planets of heaven; from her who, at the cost of her alms, her prayers, and her blood, is still the first to make Thee known, loved, and blessed by the most remote nations, seated in the shadow of death![1] And thou, O Mary, powerful Protectress of France, Mother of Mercy! thou wilt not belie the solemn oracle delivered for thy glory and our consolation by one of the most worthy mouthpieces of thy Son: *The kingdom of France is the kingdom of Mary, it will never perish—Regnum Gallicæ, regnum Mariæ, nunquam peribit!*[2] And, for France, not to perish, is to become Catholic again.

worth more than steel and gold. He belongs to the humblest classes, because he must be the representative of all, and chiefly of the humble and the poor. . . . This is not a human but a divine institution.

"He who sits at present in the Chair of St. Peter is Pius IX. He is the only king who remains fearless in the world, and he is fearless because he has faith. Advanced in years, unarmed, without material resources, surrounded by enemies and snares, you may contemplate him with cross in hand, or with eyes raised towards heaven, or uttering words of truth and life to earth. There have been days when he spoke, and all the Bishops of the Universal Church, and the Universal Church with them, listened with respect, and all we that are Catholics should listen to his words with the same respect.

"Yet this man, this king all graciousness, adorned with the triple diadem of holiness, age, and misfortune, before whom the Calvinistic Guizot and the Voltairian Thiers bow their heads, this man, the noblest figure in the world, has been called a fool, and treated as an impostor! His last encyclical has been mocked. . . . Behold what has been done, what has been said in this Europe of ours, where there is not a spot of ground but has been made glorious by the valour of a Christian hero or the blood of a Christian martyr!

"There are wretches who go still further. While they ask for all kinds of liberty, which they use and abuse, thanks to the guilty toleration of government, which should never let liberty be employed for evil; while, in virtue of their own authority, they make known to their followers the words of the Pope in order to see them ridiculed, they have the truly amazing effrontery to ask for the punishment of the Bishops, those Princes of the Church, who, in publishing the words of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, have only fulfilled a sacred obligation, and done so in virtue of the will of God, as successors of the Apostles! These wretches have insulted the Bishops by calling them fools and factionists. They have railed against their courageous language. In a word, according to a most happy expression, *these men, who make all things a barricade against the throne, now make the throne a barricade against the Church!*"

[1] It will easily be understood that, unfortunately, these praises do not pertain to France as a nation, but to French Catholics.

[2] Benedict XIV.

Prayer.

O my God! who art all love, I thank Thee for having moved me to read this history of Thy charity towards men. God loving men, loving them always, always intent on doing them good: such are the great truths written on every page of Religion. How, after this, can we fail to love Thee? For Thou hast loved us so much only to obtain our love. It seems as if Thou couldst not be happy without us.

I renew, therefore, with fresh good will, my resolution to love God above all things, and my neighbour as myself for the love of God.

SMALL CATECHISM

FIRST LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. FIRST PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. WHITHER did the Apostles retire after the Ascension of the Saviour?

A. After the Ascension of the Saviour, the Apostles retired to Jerusalem with the Blessed Virgin, and entered the Upper Chamber, to await in prayer and meditation the descent of the Holy Ghost, whom they received on the day of Pentecost.

Q. Relate the history of this miracle.

A. About nine o'clock in the morning, a great noise, like that of a mighty wind, was heard throughout the whole house in which the Apostles were assembled. At the same time there appeared tongues, as it were, of fire resting on every one of them. They immediately began to speak different languages, and, changed into new men, went forth to preach Jesus crucified.

Q. Continue.

A. A multitude of people, hearing of what had just occurred, ran to the Upper Chamber; and, though this multitude consisted of people of all nations, yet all understood the Apostles. This miracle, joined with St. Peter's sermon, at once converted three thousand persons.

Q. What did the Apostles do next?

A. The Apostles baptised the new believers, after which Peter and John went up to the temple, where they miraculously cured a man lame from his birth.

Q. What was the effect of this new miracle?

A. This new miracle, accompanied with a second sermon from St Peter, converted five thousand persons.

Q. What did the chief priests do?

A. The chief priests, alarmed at the progress of the Gospel, caused the Apostles to be seized and scourged, and forbade them to preach in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Q. What answer did the Apostles make?

A. The Apostles made answer, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* And they continued their mission; but the Jews, more angry than before, condemned St. Stephen to be stoned.

Q. What was the result of this persecution?

A. The result of this persecution was to propagate the Gospel at a distance; for some of the disciples spread through Samaria and Judea, where they made a great many conversions.

Q. What conversions did Philip the Deacon make?

A. Philip the Deacon converted, among others, a famous magician called Simon, of the city of Samaria, and a minister of the Queen of Ethiopia, who had come to Jerusalem to adore the true God.

Q. Whither did St. Peter and St. John go?

A. St. Peter and St. John went to Samaria, in order to give Confirmation to the new believers.

Q. What did Simon the Magician propose to them?

A. Simon the Magician proposed to them that they should sell him the power of giving the Holy Ghost and performing miracles. St. Peter reproved him. But, instead of repenting, he became a personal enemy of the Apostles.

Q. Who was the most eager persecutor of the Church?

A. The most eager persecutor of the Church was a young man named Saul, who had just set out for Damascus, at the head of a body of soldiers, to arrest the Christians of this city.

Q. What happened to him on the way?

A. On the way, he was suddenly surrounded with a bright light, and thrown to the ground. At the same time, he heard a voice from heaven saying to him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*

Q. What did Saul answer?

A. Saul, trembling, answered, *Lord, who art thou?* The voice said to him, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. What,* asked Saul, *wilt Thou have me to do? Go to Damascus,* added the voice, *and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.* He went and was baptised.

Prayer, p. 12.

SECOND LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. LIVES OF SS. PETER AND PAUL, CONTINUED. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT did the Apostles do after preaching the Gospel in Judea?

A. After preaching the Gospel in Judea, the Apostles set out to preach it to the whole world.

Q. Whither did St. Peter turn his steps?

A. St Peter went to the town of Joppe, where God made known to him that the Gentiles were about to be called to the Gospel, and that it was he, as head of the Church, who should open the way for them.

Q. With whom did the conversion of the Gentiles begin?

A. The conversion of the Gentiles began with a Roman officer, named Cornelius, then in garrison at Cæsarea. This man, fearing God and very charitable, sent for St. Peter, who baptised him and all his house.

Q. Whither did St. Peter go on leaving Cæsarea?

A. From Cæsarea St. Peter went to Antioch, the capital of Syria, where he fixed his see. He then travelled through a great part of Asia, and went to Rome, where he encountered Simon the Magician and converted great numbers. After this he set out for the East.

Q. What did he do at Jerusalem?

A. He presided in the Council of Jerusalem, at which the other Apostles were present, and which decided that the converted Gentiles should not be required to follow certain practices of the Law of Moses.

Q. How many letters did St. Peter write?

A. St. Peter wrote two letters, in which we find all the tenderness of a father and all the dignity of the head of the Church.

Q. To whom did he address himself in these letters?

A. He addressed himself in these letters to all the Faithful scattered over the Roman Empire.

Q. What did he do next?

A. He next returned to Rome, where he was to receive the crown of martyrdom in company with St. Paul, who had shared his struggles.

Q. Who was St. Paul?

A. St. Paul was a Jew by descent, born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, and a Roman citizen by birth. After persecuting the Christians, he became the most earnest Apostle of the Gospel, which he preached first at Damascus, whence he was obliged to flee from the fury of the Jews.

Q. Whither did he go?

A. He went to Jerusalem, where he saw St. Peter; and then to Antioch, where, in conjunction with St. Barnabas, he made so many conversions that the Faithful here received the name of Christians.

Q. What did he do next?

A. He next set out for the island of Cyprus, and converted its governor, named Sergius Paulus, in memory of which he took the name of Paul.

Q. What countries did he next visit?

A. Accompanied by St. Barnabas, he next travelled through Asia Minor, and went to the city of Lystra, where he restored health to a man crippled from his birth. At the sight of this miracle, the inhabitants, who were pagans, thought that the two Apostles were gods, and wanted to offer sacrifice to the--

Q. What happened to St. Paul in the city of Philippi?

A. St. Paul, having gone to Philippi, a city of Macedonia, with a disciple named Silas, delivered a young female slave possessed by the devil.

Q. What did the girl's masters do?

A. The girl's masters were highly provoked; for she used to pretend to foretell the future, and thus brought them a great deal of money. They therefore got Paul and Silas beaten with rods and thrown into prison, as disturbers of the public peace.

Q. What was the result?

A. The result was that, during the night, the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, and the chains of the prisoners were broken; the gaoler was baptised with all his family; and, next day, Paul and Silas, who had converted a great many persons in the city, were released.

Prayer, p. 22.

THIRD LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. LIFE OF ST. PAUL, CONTINUED. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. CONTINUE the history of St. Paul.

A. On leaving the city of Philippi, St. Paul went to Thessalonica, where he founded a church of fervent Christians, to whom he wrote later on two of his letters. He next went to Athens, appeared before the senate called the Areopagus, confounded philosophy and idolatry, and shortly afterwards set out for Corinth.

Q. Did he remain there long?

A. He remained there eighteen months in order to found a Christian community, to whom he addressed two epistles, in which are displayed all the zeal, charity, and prudence of the Great Apostle. From Corinth he passed to Ephesus.

Q. What happened to him at Ephesus?

A. He was the object of a violent tumult, raised by a silversmith, who made statues of Diana; but, before leaving the city, he wrote his admirable letter to the Faithful of Rome.

Q. Whither did he go on leaving Ephesus?

A. On leaving Ephesus, he directed his steps towards Jerusalem, bearing to the Faithful of this city the alms of their brethren scattered over all Asia. On his way he passed through Troas.

Q. What miracle did he work here?

A. While he was preaching, a young man, sitting at a window and

overcome by sleep, fell down from the third story and was killed. St. Paul restored him to life, and set out for Miletus.

Q. What did he do at Miletus?

A. At Miletus he assembled the Bishops and Pastors of the Church of Ephesus, to whom he bade his last farewell, informing them that they should never see him again in this world. All burst into tears, and accompanied him to the ship on which he embarked for Jerusalem.

Q. What happened to him at Jerusalem?

A. At Jerusalem, he was arrested in the temple by the Jews, and delivered to the Roman Governor, who sent him to Rome to be tried at the tribunal of Nero. St. Paul spent two years in prison here, preaching the Gospel to all who came to see him.

Q. Did he obtain his liberty?

A. He at length obtained his liberty, passed again into the East, wrote to the Churches and to his disciples Titus and Timothy, and re-entered Rome with St. Peter. They filled with Christians not only the city, but even the palace of Nero, who could not endure a religion so holy as Christianity.

Q. What did Nero do?

A. He condemned the two Apostles to death. St. Peter was crucified with his head downwards; St. Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded. Their glorious martyrdom occurred on the 29th of June, in the year of Our Lord 66 or 67.

Prayer, p. 36.

FOURTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. LIVES OF THE OTHER APOSTLES. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. WHO was St. Andrew?

A. St. Andrew was a brother of St. Peter. He was ranked among the Apostles by Our Lord Himself, carried the Gospel into Asia Minor and the country of the Scythians, and was at length crucified in the city of Patras.

Q. Who was St. James the Greater?

A. St. James, surnamed the Greater, was a brother of St. John the Evangelist, and a son of Salomé, cousin-german of the Blessed Virgin. After Pentecost, he preached to the twelve tribes of Israel scattered over the various countries of the earth, and made his way as far as Spain.

Q. What did he do next?

A. He next returned to Jerusalem, where he was beheaded by com-

mand of Herod Agrippa, who had not long to await the punishment of his crime, for he died soon afterwards, eaten up alive by worms.

Q. Who was St. John?

A. St. John was the youngest of the Apostles, and a special favourite of Our Lord. After Pentecost, he preached the Gospel to the Parthians, a famous people, who alone disputed with the Romans the empire of the world. He returned to Asia Minor, and settled in the city of Ephesus.

Q. What happened to him?

A. The Emperor Domitian had him brought to Rome, where he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil; but he came forth from it full of life.

Q. What did the tyrant do?

A. The tyrant banished him to the island of Patmos, where he wrote his Apocalypse, that is to say, a revelation of the things which would occur to the Church in the course of ages. He afterwards returned to Ephesus, wrote his Gospel, as well as three letters to the Faithful, and died at about the age of a hundred years.

Q. Who was St. James the Less?

A. St. James the Less was son of Alpheus and Mary, a near relative of the Blessed Virgin's. He was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, from which he wrote a letter to all the churches. The Jews, out of hatred to Christianity, threw him down headlong from the top of the temple.

Q. Who was St. Philip?

A. St. Philip, a native of Bethsaida, in Galilee, was one of Our Lord's first disciples, and preached the Gospel in Phrygia, where he died at a very advanced age.

Q. Who was St. Bartholomew?

A. St. Bartholomew was also of Galilee. After Pentecost, he directed his steps towards the most barbarous countries of the East, penetrated to the extremities of India, and returned to Armenia, where he was martyred.

Q. Who was St. Thomas?

A. St. Thomas was a Galilean by birth. He became the Apostle of the extreme East, and particularly of the Indies, where he sealed his faith with his blood.

Q. Who was St. Matthew?

A. St. Matthew was a publican or tax-gatherer, converted by Our Lord Himself. He was placed in the number of the Apostles, and, after Pentecost, preached the Gospel in Africa, where he died.

Q. Who was St. Simon?

A. St. Simon was of Cana, in Galilee. After Pentecost, he set out for Persia, where he was martyred by order of some idolatrous priests.

Q. Who was St. Jude?

A. St. Jude, called also Thaddeus, was brother of St. James the Less. He planted the Faith in Libya, returned to Jerusalem, and died in Armenia, after writing a letter to all the Churches that he might put

them on their guard against the rising heresies of the Nicolites and Gnostics.

Q. Who was St. Matthias?

A. St. Matthias was, according to tradition, one of the shepherds who had the happiness of adoring Our Lord in the crib. Having become His disciple, he was chosen in the Upper Chamber to replace Judas. History does not acquaint us with his evangelical conquests, nor with the particulars of his death.

Q. How many Evangelists were there?

A. There were four Evangelists: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. They are so called because each of them wrote a Life of Our Lord.

Prayer, p. 51.

FIFTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. MANNERS OF THE PAGANS. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT was the state of the world at the death of the Apostles?

A. At the death of the Apostles, there were two societies standing face to face with each other, and ready to come to blows: pagan society, worn out with crimes and excesses, and Christian society, young and shining with virtues. Rome was then the capital of the world and the centre of idolatry.

Q. What kind of a place was Rome in those days?

A. Rome was an immense city, which counted about five million inhabitants, eight hundred bath establishments, and four hundred and twenty temples of idols, in which there were adored thirty thousand gods. One of its amphitheatres accommodated eighty-seven thousand spectators. Twenty-nine roads, paved with large flag-stones, and bordered with marble tombs, ornamented with gold and brass, led out from Rome to the provinces.

Q. What was the wealth of the inhabitants?

A. The wealth of the inhabitants was beyond all that can be told.

Q. What was their religion?

A. The Romans having adopted the religions of all the peoples whom they conquered, there were assembled in Rome the grossest superstitions and the most hideous deities known over the whole earth.

Q. What were their morals?

A. Their morals were such that one would be ashamed to speak of them. It is enough to know that the most shocking crimes were authorised by religion, by the silence of the laws, and by custom, and that they were committed publicly by children and old people, by the rich and the poor.

Q. What were their laws?

A. Their laws were laws of hatred and cruelty: the hardest oppression weighed on all who could be oppressed.

Q. On whom?

A. On woman: she was first the slave of her father, who might kill or sell her, and then of her husband, who might sell or dismiss her according to his caprice. On the child: the laws let it be destroyed before its birth, nay, required this in certain cases; they let it be killed, abandoned, or sold after its birth, and religion chose it in preference for slaughtering or burning in honour of the gods.

Q. On any others?

A. On slaves: they were sold like beasts; they were branded on the forehead with a red hot iron; during the day they were urged to their work with heavy lashes of a whip, and during the night chained down in subterranean dungeons; they were put to death for the least awkwardness. On prisoners of war: they were reduced to slavery; they were slaughtered on the tombs of conquerors; they were obliged to slaughter one another in the amphitheatre for the amusement of the people.

Q. On any others besides?

A. On debtors: the law permitted creditors to cut in pieces the bodies of their insolvent debtors. On the poor: they were called unclean animals; they were insulted for their poverty; and one emperor, to be rid of them, loaded three ships with them, and sent them out to be sunk in the open sea. Such was Pagan Rome when St. Peter entered it.

Prayer, p. 66.

SIXTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. Was there not another Rome under Pagan Rome?

A. Under Pagan Rome there was another Rome, a Subterranean Rome, inhabited by the Early Christians, and called the Catacombs.

Q. Are the Catacombs very extensive?

A. The Catacombs form an immense city, in which we meet with chapels, streets in great numbers, squares, cross-roads, and a multitude of tombs.

Q. What is the meaning of the word *Catacomb?*

A. The word *Catacomb* means a place under ground, and also a cemetery.

Q. By whom were the Catacombs hollowed out?

A. The Catacombs were hollowed out by our ancestors in the Faith: they are full of paintings and inscriptions which remind us of their confidence, resignation, and charity, as well as of the principal truths of Religion.

Q. What was the use of the Catacombs?

A. The Catacombs served as a retreat, a church, and a burial-place, for the Early Christians in times of persecution.

Q. Did the Christians remain long in the Catacombs?

A. Great numbers of Christians remained continually in the Catacombs during the persecutions, which lasted for three hundred years almost without interruption.

Q. What was their life?

A. It was an admirable life of sanctity and innocence. To the pride of the Pagans they opposed humility, seeking neither to be honoured nor to change their condition; to the luxury of the Pagans, a modest simplicity, which was particularly remarkable in their dress and furniture; and to the debaucheries of the Pagans, temperance and fasting. The greatest sobriety presided at their private repasts, and even at their innocent feasts, called *Agapæ*.

Q. What were the *Agapæ?*

A. The *Agapæ* were charitable repasts which the Early Christians gave among themselves. The rich defrayed the expenses, the poor were invited, and all ate together without distinction, as children of the same family. The repast began and ended with prayer.

Q. What were their fast days?

A. They fasted not only in Lent, but on Wednesday and Friday every week. The Church at Rome fasted also on Saturday, in memory of St. Peter's triumph over Simon the Magician.

Prayer, p. 76.

SEVENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS CONTINUED. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT did our ancestors in the Faith oppose to the shameful disorders of the Pagans?

A. To the shameful disorders of the Pagans, our ancestors in the Faith opposed the purity of angels: even their enemies were obliged to admit it.

Q. What virtue did they oppose to that thirst for gold which was so remarkable 'n the Pagans?

A. To that thirst for gold which was so remarkable in the Pagans,

our ancestors opposed detachment or voluntary poverty. Satisfied with the necessaries of life, they gave everything over and above to relieve the poor, or to assist widows and orphans. They looked on riches as a hindrance to liberty of soul.

Q. To all the crimes in general of the Pagans, what did they oppose?

A. To all the crimes in general of the Pagans, they opposed a life of prayer and sanctity. They rose at an early hour. Their first action was the sign of the cross. They dressed themselves modestly. The whole family then assembled in a private room, where the father said morning prayers aloud.

Q. How did they pray?

A. They prayed kneeling or standing, the head bare, the eyes raised to Heaven, the arms stretched out, and the face turned towards the East.

Q. Where did they go after prayer?

A. After prayer they went to the church, in order to hear Mass, at which they communicated daily. They then left the church modestly, and returned to their homes or went to their work.

Q. With what action did they begin their work?

A. They began their work with the sign of the cross. At nine o'clock they prayed again, after which they continued their work till noon, the time for taking their repast.

Q. How did they take it?

A. Before nourishing their bodies, they nourished their souls by reading some passages from the Holy Scriptures. They then blessed the food which they were about to take. After the repast, they returned thanks, read again some passages from the Bible, and went back cheerfully to their work, during which they used to sing pious hymns.

Q. What work engaged them after noon?

A. After noon those who had leisure gave themselves to various works of charity, such as visiting the poor or prisoners for the Faith. At three o'clock they prayed again.

Q. How did they spend the evening?

A. In the evening all the family met together, and the parents instructed their children. Supper was taken, sacred canticles were sung, the Scripture was read, prayers were said, and all retired to rest, having first made the sign of the cross over their beds.

Q. Did they pray during the night?

A. They rose again at midnight to pray. Such was the life of our ancestors. By imitating it we shall also become Saints. We shall, moreover, oblige bad Christians to respect Religion, as our ancestors obliged the Pagans themselves to respect it.

Prayer, p. 87.

EIGHTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. MANNERS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS CONTINUED. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT did our ancestors oppose to the law of hatred and cruelty that reigned among the Pagans?

A. To the law of hatred and cruelty that reigned among the Pagans, our ancestors opposed the law of universal charity, and fulfilled to the letter this command of the Saviour: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Q. Explain your answer.

A. Fathers and mothers loved their children: instead of destroying them before or after birth, as the Pagans did, they took the utmost care of them, regarded them as a sacred deposit, and neglected no means of training them to virtue.

Q. What was the chief object of their vigilance?

A. The chief object of their vigilance was to keep their children far from dangerous companions and books: the Gospel was the only work that they placed in the hands of their little ones.

Q. Did fathers and mothers love each other?

A. Fathers and mothers loved each other with an affection quite supernatural. It appeared in their constant affability, in their tender thoughtfulness, in their anxious cares, and above all in the fervent prayers of one when the other had not the happiness of being a Christian.

Q. Did the children imitate the example of their parents?

A. The children imitated the example of their parents, and loved one another with a most sincere love. They were to be seen praying, suffering, and dying together in the amphitheatres.

Q. Did the Early Christians love one another?

A. The Early Christians loved one another to such a degree that the astonished Pagans cried out, "Behold how they love one another, and how they are always ready to die for one another!"

Q. What names did they give themselves?

A. They gave themselves the names of father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter, to show that they were all only one family, and this charity extended to Christians of the most distant Churches.

Q. Who were the special objects of their charity?

A. The special objects of their charity were the ministers of the Lord, the poor, and Christians condemned to the mines on account of the Faith.

Q. Did they love all mankind?

A. They loved all mankind, even their persecutors; did them all kinds of services, prayed for them, paid the taxes faithfully, and acquitted themselves of all the duties of good soldiers and good citizens.

Q. Did their charity extend to any others?

A. Their charity also extended to the dead. They took great care of sepulchres; they washed the bodies of the deceased, embalmed them, and wrapped them up in fine linen or silk, and offered prayers and alms for the repose of their souls.

Prayer, p. 102.

NINTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. How did our ancestors in the Faith arrive at such great sanctity?

A. Our ancestors in the Faith arrived at such great sanctity by endeavouring to perform all their actions well every day, and by dividing their time between prayer, labour, and the practice of works of charity but above all by avoiding the occasions of sin.

Q. What were those occasions?

A. Those occasions were chiefly shows, dances, and public festivities, at which our ancestors used never to appear, for reasons that are still of the same weight with their children.

Q. What are they?

A. The Early Christians rightly considered shows, comedies, and tragedies as a school of libertinism, and thought that a Christian ought not to go to see those things which he is forbidden to imitate, because it is very difficult to keep oneself from yielding to passions when everything around one tends to excite them.

Q. Continue your answer.

A. They said that age could not excuse it, because one is human, that is, always weak; that custom could not authorise it, because the custom of the world is no rule for a Christian; that, by going to plays, the neighbour is scandalised; and that if there were no spectators, there would be no actors.

Q. What did they say of balls and public festivities?

A. They said the same of balls and public festivities, and asked the Pagans, who reproached them for not attending thereat, if the lords of the earth could not be honoured in any way but by abandoning oneself to the excesses of intemperance and offending the Lord of Heaven.

Q. Was this virtuous conduct pleasing to the Pagans?

A. This virtuous conduct was no more pleasing to the Pagans than the conduct of good people is pleasing to the bad Christians of our own days. The Jews and the idolators spread ever so many calumnies against our ancestors and against Religion.

Q. Who refuted them?

A. The Apologists of Religion refuted them eloquently; the virtues of the Christians refuted them still more eloquently. But, instead of acknowledging the truth, their enemies began to persecute them, and millions of victims were sacrificed out of hatred to Religion.

Q. How are these victims called?

A. These victims are called *Martyrs*, that is to say, Witnesses.

Q. Who are the Martyrs?

A. The Martyrs are Christians who died in defence of the Faith. The number of Martyrs during the first three centuries exceeded eleven millions.

Q. What do you remark on martyrdom?

A. I remark on martyrdom that it is a twofold proof of the truth of Religion.

Q. How so?

A. Because (1) martyrdom is the accomplishment of a prophecy of Our Lord, who said that His disciples would be put to death on account of His doctrine; and because (2) it is a miracle that millions of virtuous persons, of all ages, of all ranks, of all lands, should have suffered all kinds of torments for the space of three hundred years without a murmur, and even with joy.

Q. What do you understand by the Acts of the Martyrs?

A. By the Acts of the Martyrs is understood an account of their arrest, examination, sentence, and death.

Q. How did the Christians procure the Acts of the Martyrs?

A. The Christians procured the Acts of the Martyrs in two ways (1) by paying the clerks of the court for leave to copy them from the registers; and (2) by mixing secretly among the Pagans during the trial of the Martyrs and writing down all that occurred.

Q. What care did they take of the Martyrs?

A. They often visited the Martyrs while lying in prison. After their death they eagerly collected their blood, buried them reverently, and on the tombs had the holy sacrifice offered up, not to the Martyrs, but to the God who crowned them.

Prayer, p. 114.

TENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. FIRST AND SECOND PERSECUTIONS. (FIRST CENTURY.)

Q. How many general persecutions were there against the Christians?

A. There were ten general persecutions against the Christians: they are called general because they were commanded by the Roman emperors, masters of the greatest part of the world.

Q. Who was the first Roman emperor that persecuted the Christians?

A. The first Roman emperor that persecuted the Christians was Nero, in the year of Our Lord 64. Nero, having set fire to a great portion of the city of Rome in order to have the pleasure of witnessing a conflagration, accused the Christians of this crime, and put an immense multitude of them to death.

Q. What tortures did he make them endure?

A. He had them covered with the skins of beasts and devoured by dogs, or clad in garments thick with pitch and wax, and then lighted to serve as lamps during the night. It was in this persecution that SS. Peter and Paul died, and also one of Nero's chief officers, named Tropes.

Q. Did God let the cruelty of Nero pass unpunished?

A. God did not let the cruelty of Nero pass unpunished. The Romans rose up against him. He was obliged to take refuge in a marsh, where he put an end to his life. This tragic fate, as well as that of all the other persecutors, shows us that God continually watches over His Church.

Q. Give another proof of this watchfulness.

A. Another proof of this watchfulness is the destruction of Jerusalem, which, after crucifying the Saviour, never ceased to persecute His disciples. It was besieged by Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, in the year of Our Lord 70.

Q. What signs preceded the destruction of Jerusalem?

A. The most frightful signs preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. A comet, shaped like a sword, hung for a whole year over this doomed city; and a man named *Jesus* ran about the streets of Jerusalem for four years, crying out day and night, *Woe to Jerusalem! woe to the temple · woe to all the people!*

Q. Why all these signs?

A. God let all these signs appear in order to accomplish the prediction of Our Lord and to warn Christians to leave Jerusalem.

Q. What happened during the siege?

A. During the siege the Jews slaughtered one another; the city presented a picture of hell; and famine set in so severely that a woman ate her own child.

Q. What was the end of Jerusalem and the temple?

A. In spite of the prohibition of Titus, the temple was burned to ashes; after which, the conqueror razed the city, and passed the plough over it.

Q. Who was the second Roman emperor that persecuted the Christians?

A. The second Roman emperor that persecuted the Christians was Domitian, brother of Titus, whom he succeeded in the year of Our Lord 81.

Q. What persons did he put to death?

A. He put to death his own relatives, because they were Christians, and threw St. John the Evangelist into a caldron of boiling oil; but God punished the tyrant in an exemplary manner, for he was murdered in the year of Our Lord 96, and deprived of all honours, even that of burial.

Prayer, p. 124.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. THIRD AND FOURTH PERSECUTIONS. (FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES.)

Q. How was the Church attacked after the persecution of Domitian?

A. After the persecution of Domitian, the Church was attacked by a spirit of division, which shook charity a good deal among the Faithful of Corinth. But Pope St. Clement wrote them a letter, and so restored union, very necessary for the Church, as a new persecution was coming on.

Q. What was this persecution?

A. It was the persecution of Trajan. This emperor, abandoned to the most shameful vices, hated the Christians, whose holy life was a censure on his debaucheries. He ordered the arrest of St. Ignatius.

Q. Who was St. Ignatius?

A. St. Ignatius, a disciple of St. John, had been Bishop of Antioch for forty years. He was brought before the emperor, who sent him to Rome, there to be devoured by wild beasts as a spectacle for the people

Q. What happened during his voyage?

A. During his voyage, he met at Smyrna St. Polycarp, like himself a disciple of St. John, and several other Bishops, who came to offer him the prayers of the Churches. He wrote hence to the Faithful of Rome, begging them not to ask his release of God or man.

Q. When did his martyrdom occur?

A. Having reached Rome on the 20th of December, the last day of the public games, the Saint was immediately led to the amphitheatre, where two lions fell on him and quickly devoured him. His bones were taken up respectfully, and carried in triumph to Antioch. They were afterwards brought back to Rome.

Q. How did Trajan close his life?

A. Trajan, worn out by vices, closed his life miserably, like all other persecutors of Christians, and their wretched death teaches us that no one rebels with impunity against Our Lord.

Q. Who was the fourth persecutor of the Christians?

A. The fourth persecutor of the Christians was Adrian, who succeeded Trajan in the year of Our Lord 116. This cruel, superstitious, and debauched prince having consulted the devils, they answered him that a widow named Symphorosa never ceased tormenting them.

Q. What did the tyrant do?

A. The tyrant brought out Symphorosa with her seven sons, who were Christians like herself, and commanded her to sacrifice to the gods. Symphorosa refused, and the tyrant condemned her to death with her seven children.

Q. Did any one take up the defence of the Christians?

A. Quadratus Bishop of Athens, and Aristides, an Athenian philosopher, set before the emperor a defence of the Christians, and the persecution ceased. Nevertheless, the hand of God weighed heavy on Adrian, who, sunk in a deep melancholy, committed suicide.

Prayer, p. 137.

TWELFTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. FIFTH AND SIXTH PERSECUTIONS. (SECOND CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT was the fifth general persecution?

A. The fifth general persecution was that of Antoninus. This emperor, a slave of the most infamous passions, let a great many Christians be slaughtered, though there had been no new edicts issued against them.

Q. Who were the chief victims of this persecution?

A. The chief victims of this persecution were a Roman lady, named Felicitas, and her seven sons, whom Publius, the prefect of Rome, put to death amid the most frightful torments.

Q. What defender did God raise up for the Church?

A. The defender that God raised up for the Church was St. Justin, who vindicated Religion so well from all the calumnies of the Jews and Pagans that the emperor put a stop to the persecution, but died shortly afterwards, and his successor renewed the war against the Christians.

Q. What was the sixth general persecution?

A. The sixth general persecution was that of Marcus Aurelius. This emperor was worthy, by his pride and duplicity, to be the enemy of truth. St. Justin addressed a new apology to him, although he suspected that it would cost him his life. He was not mistaken: his head was cut off.

Q. Who were the other victims of this persecution?

A. There were many other victims of this persecution: foremost ap pears St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.

Q. Who was St. Polycarp?

A. St. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John, with whom he had lived a long time. The persecution having been rekindled, his friends urged him to leave the city. He took their advice, and retired to a country-house not far distant.

Q. What befell him?

A. He was soon arrested; and, after giving refreshments to the horsemen that had come for him, he was led away to Smyrna, and placed before the proconsul in the amphitheatre.

Q. What did the proconsul say to St. Polycarp?

A. The proconsul said to St. Polycarp, "Insult Jesus Christ." Polycarp made this beautiful answer: "For four score and six years I have been serving Him, and He has never done me any evil. On the contrary, He has loaded me with favours. How can I insult my King and my Saviour?"

Q. What did the proconsul command?

A. The proconsul commanded that Polycarp should be burned alive; but the flames, far from doing him any harm, spread out like the sails of a ship well filled with the wind, and rose in an arch over his head.

Q. What did the proconsul do?

A. The proconsul, seeing the miracle, ordered a spearman to stab him; and the blood gushed forth in such abundance as to extinguish the fire. Thus did St. Polycarp consummate his sacrifice on the 25th of April, at two o'clock, p.m., in the year of Our Lord 166.

Prayer, p. 149.

THIRTEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. SIXTH PERSECUTION, CONTINUED. (SECOND CENTURY.)

Q. After what occasion did Marcus Aurelius give some repose to the Christians?

A. Marcus Aurelius gave some repose to the Christians after the miracle of the Thundering Legion.

Q. Relate the history of this miracle.

A. One day the Roman army, under the command of the emperor, found itself caught in a defile, surrounded by the enemy, and exposed to the danger of dying from thirst.

Q. Was it saved?

A. It was saved by the Thundering Legion, which consisted of Christian soldiers. They went down on their knees, and by their fervent prayers obtained for the Romans a plentiful shower of rain, while a storm of hail, accompanied with thunder, burst on the enemy, who at once threw away all their weapons.

Q. How did Marcus Aurelius acknowledge this miracle?

A. Marcus Aurelius acknowledged this miracle by writing of it to the senate, and by raising in Rome a monument regarding it, which still exists; but the devil soon drove him on again to persecute the Christians.

Q. In what place particularly did this new persecution break out?

A. This new persecution broke out particularly in Gaul, and the city of Lyons was deluged with the blood of Martyrs.

Q. Who were the chief Martyrs?

A. The chief Martyrs were, St. Pothinus, Bishop of that city, more than ninety years of age, who was thrown into a close dungeon, where he died after two days; and Maturus and Sanctus, who, after serving as a spectacle for the people, were taken from the wild beasts, seated in a red hot iron chair, and beheaded.

Q. Who else?

A. There were also Attalus, Alexander, Blandina, and young Ponticus, only fifteen years of age.

Q. Who was Blandina?

A. Blandina was a slave. She was timid, and of a very delicate constitution; but Our Lord gave her such strength that she tired out her executioners. In reply to all the questions put to her, she merely said, "I am a Christian, and there is no evil committed among us."

Q. How did she crown her martyrdom?

A. After being exposed in a net to a wild cow, which tossed her in the air and tore all her body, her throat was cut.

Q. What became of Ponticus?

A. Ponticus, encouraged by Blandina, went bravely through all the stages of his martyrdom, and completed his sacrifice under the sword.

Q. Was there any other remarkable Martyr in Gaul?

A. There were many other remarkable Martyrs in Gaul, especially St. Symphorian, a young man distinguished alike by his birth, his learning, and his amiable character. Heraclius, the governor of the province, had him arrested, and asked him his name and profession.

Q. What did he answer?

A. He answered, "I am a Christian."

Q. What did the governor do?

A. The governor tried flatteries, promises, and threats, one after another, in order to make him sacrifice to the gods; but all proving useless, he condemned him to be beheaded.

Q. What happened to the Saint on his way to execution?

A. While the Saint was on his way to execution, his mother, venerable by her virtues even more than by her years, called out to him from the top of the city wall, "Symphorian, my son, look up to heaven; be of good heart; do not fear death, the road to everlasting life."

Prayer, p. 159.

FOURTEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. SEVENTH PERSECUTION. (THIRD CENTURY.)

Q. In what manner did the third century open?

A. The third century opened with a war more fierce and general against the Church. Philosophers and heretics joined with executioners to destroy it; but God took care to defend it.

Q. How did He defend it?

A. He defended it by raising up against the philosophers and heretics two great Apologists, and against the persecutors a host of Martyrs. The two great Apologists were Tertullian and Origen.

Q. Who was Tertullian?

A. Tertullian was a Priest of Carthage, born there in the year of Our Lord 160. Having gone to Rome, he published an "Apology," that is to say, a defence of the Christians, which he presented to the rulers of the empire, and which struck a mortal blow at Paganism.

Q. What work did he publish against the heretics?

A. After confounding the Pagans, Tertullian turned on the heretics, and refuted all heresies past, present, and to come, in a work called the Prescriptions.

Q. By what argument?

A. By this simple argument: *The True Church is that which goes back uninterruptedly to Jesus Christ; the Catholic Church alone goes back uninterruptedly to Jesus Christ; therefore, the Catholic Church alone is the True Church.*

Q. What was the end of Tertullian?

A. Tertullian had the misfortune to fall into some serious errors. But this takes nothing from the merit of the works that he wrote previously.

Q. Who was Origen?

A. Origen, son of the Martyr Leonidas, was born at Alexandria in the year of Our Lord 185. Gifted with a powerful genius, he became one of the brightest lights of the Church, and triumphantly refuted one of the most dangerous enemies of Religion, named Celsus. Origen also fell into some errors; but it would appear that he never adhered to them obstinately

Q. What was the seventh general persecution?

A. The seventh general persecution was that of the emperor Septimus Severus, who, in the year 200, published an edict of proscription: blood flowed in all parts of the empire.

Q. Who were the chief Martyrs in this persecution?

A. The chief Martyrs in this persecution were SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, with their companions, all of the city of Carthage.

Q. Who were SS. Perpetua and Felicitas?

A. St. Perpetua, aged twenty-two years, was of a noble family, married, and the mother of a child that she carried at her breast. St. Felicitas was a slave, arrested like the other Martyrs by order of the proconsul Hilarian.

Q. What did St. Perpetua's father do?

A. St. Perpetua's father, who was a pagan, went and implored her to renounce the Faith, and not to make him die of grief. The proconsul joined with him; but Perpetua contented herself with this reply: "I am a Christian."

Q. What happened then?

A. The Martyrs were then led to prison, the keeper of which they converted, as well as a great many pagans, who went to see them during the Free Supper.

Q. What was the Free Supper?

A. The Free Supper was a meal given to the Martyrs, in a hall open to the public, on the eve of their death.

Q. What were the punishments of these holy Martyrs?

A. These holy Martyrs were led out the next day to the amphitheatre, where three of them were exposed to the beasts, while SS. Perpetua and Felicitas were wrapped up in nets and exposed to a wild cow, which injured them very much.

Q. What did the people ask?

A. To enjoy the sufferings of the holy Martyrs, the people asked that they should all have their throats cut in the middle of the amphitheatre. They there received their death-strokes without making the least stir, or uttering the least complaint.

Prayer, p. 172.

FIFTEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. EIGHTH AND NINTH PERSECUTIONS. (THIRD CENTURY.)

Q. WHO was the author of the eighth general persecution?

A. The author of the eighth general persecution was Decius, a ferocious prince, who died miserably, like Septimus Severus and all the other persecutors.

Q. Mention some of the Martyrs of this persecution.

A. One of the most illustrious Martyrs of this persecution was St. Pionius of Smyrna, Priest, and disciple of St. Polycarp. To all the questions of the judge, he simply replied, "I am a Christian, a child of the Catholic Church."

Q. What torments had he to suffer?

A. He had to suffer innumerable torments, and was at length condemned to be burned alive; but, after making his prayer, he expired without the fire burning either his beard or his hair.

Q. Name some other Martyrs of this period.

A. This persecution also beheld the martyrdom of a young child, named Cyril, who, on ascending the pile, invited the bystanders to sing canticles of joy at his happiness. In Sicily, too, was martyred St. Agatha, a young virgin of illustrious family and heiress to a large fortune, who preferred to renounce all things else rather than her faith.

Q. Who was the author of the ninth general persecution?

A. The author of the ninth general persecution was Valerian, who put to death many Christians: among them Pope Sixtus II.

Q. What happened to him on the way to martyrdom?

A. As he was on the way to martyrdom, St. Laurence, Deacon of Rome, asked him, weeping, where he was going without his Deacon. The holy Pope answered, "You will follow me in three days." Laurence was arrested, and the prediction was fulfilled.

Q. What did the prefect of Rome ask him for?

A. The prefect of Rome asked him for the treasures of the Church. The Saint gathered together all the poor supported by the Church, and said to the prefect. "Behold the treasures of the Church!"

Q. What did the prefect do?

A. The prefect, enraged, ordered Laurence to be stretched on a gridiron over a fire. The Saint looked as calm there as if lying on an ordinary bed, prayed for the conversion of Rome, and sweetly expired. St. Cyprian followed him soon afterwards.

Q. Who was St. Cyprian?

A. St. Cyprian was Bishop of Carthage, and son of one of the first senators of that city. After succouring the Pagans when afflicted with the plague, he was arrested and condemned to lose his head. The Saint, on hearing his sentence, answered, "God be praised!" Having prayed for his Church, he received his death-stroke.

Prayer, p. 186.

SIXTEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. TENTH PERSECUTION. (THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES.)

Q. How did God punish the emperor Valerian?

A. God punished the emperor Valerian in a striking manner. He was made prisoner by Sapor, King of Persia, who, obliging him to stoop, used him as a footstool for mounting his horse. He was at length flayed alive, and his skin dyed red, and hung up in a temple of the king's gods.

Q. What was the tenth general persecution?

A. The tenth general persecution was that of Diocletian, who associated Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius Chlorus with him in the government of the empire: all, except the last, bore an intense hatred to Christians.

Q. What was the Theban Legion?

A. Maximian had in his army a corps made up of Christians. They were old soldiers from the East and from the neighbourhood of Thebes, in Egypt, to the number of about six thousand men: to them was given the name of the Theban Legion.

Q. How did their martyrdom occur?

A. Their martyrdom occurred thus. Maximian, having arrived in Switzerland, a short distance from Geneva, commanded them to sacrifice to the gods. They refused, and were immediately slaughtered.

Q. How did God come to the relief of His Church?

A. God came to the relief of His Church by sending into the desert a number of new Moseses, that by their prayers they might obtain victory for the Faithful, who were going to be attacked more violently than ever. These new Moseses were St. Paul, and St. Antony with his numerous disciples.

Q. Who was St. Paul?

A. St. Paul, the first hermit, was born in Egypt in 229. At the age of twenty-two years he entered the desert, where a cave served him as a dwelling-place, palm-leaves as clothing, and fruits as food.

Q. How did the Lord feed him afterwards?

A. The Lord afterwards fed him miraculously, as He had fed the Prophet Elias. St. Paul lived in the exercise of prayer and penance to the age of a hundred and thirteen years. When he died, two lions came and dug the grave in which St. Antony, singing the hymns of the Church, laid him.

Prayer, p. 197.

SEVENTEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. TENTH PERSECUTION, CONTINUED. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

Q. Who was St. Antony?

A. St. Antony, the father of cenobites, was born in Egypt, in the year 251, of a wealthy family.

Q. What do you understand by cenobites?

A. By cenobites are understood those religious who live in community, and by anchorets those religious who live in cells or caves apart.

Q. What did St. Antony do after the death of his parents?

A. After the death of his parents, St. Antony gave all his goods to the poor and retired into the desert of Thebaid, where he lived alone for forty years. He then consented to receive disciples, whose numbers became so considerable that he had to build many monasteries for them.

Q. When did this occur?

A. This occurred about the year 303, just when the emperor Diocletian was issuing the most terrible of all the edicts of persecution against the Church.

Q. Had St. Antony much to suffer in the desert?

A. St. Antony had much to suffer in the desert from the devil; but the Saint put him to flight by the sign of the cross, which he used often to recommend to his disciples, as well as watchfulness over themselves, prayer, and the thought of eternity.

Q. What age did St. Antony reach?

A. St. Antony reached the age of a hundred and five years, without any infirmity.

Q. What did he leave when dying?

A. When dying, he left to St. Athanasius his cloak and one of his sheepskins; to Bishop Serapion, his other sheepskin; and to his disciples, his hair-shirt. This was all that he possessed. He then fell asleep sweetly in the Lord.

Q. Who was St. Syncletica?

A. St. Syncletica was a descendant of a noble and virtuous family She had a large fortune; but, after the death of her parents she distributed it among the poor, and retired to a solitude not far from Alexandria. Here she became the foundress of convents for virgins in the East.

Q. Why did God establish Religious Orders?

A. God established Religious Orders for the preservation and propagation of Christianity, and for the welfare of society.

Q. What is the first service that Religious Orders render to society?

A. The first service that Religious Orders render to society is to pray for Christians who live in the world and to expiate the sins of the world.

Q. What do you remark on the establishment of Religious Orders?

A. It must be remarked, on the establishment of Religious Orders, that they were founded at the moment when Christians were entering on the ways of laxity and corruption.

Prayer, p. 212.

EIGHTEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. TENTH PERSECUTION, CONTINUED. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT is the second service that Religious Orders render to society?

A. The second service that Religious Orders render to society is to keep pure the practice of the Gospel, to which the world owes its happiness.

Q. What is the third?

A. The third is to offer a refuge to a multitude of persons who do not wish to live in the world, or whom the world does not want, or who cannot stay in the world without becoming its shame or its scourge.

Q. What is the fourth?

A. The fourth is to give the world an example of the contempt of riches and pleasures, the irregular love of which is the source of all evils.

Q. What is the fifth?

A. The fifth is to spread instruction and to relieve gratuitously all human miseries.

Q. What happened after the foundation of the first Contemplative Orders?

A. After the foundation of the first Contemplative Orders, intended to obtain victory for the Church, Diocletian commanded the bloody persecution that began in the year 303 with the chief officers of his palace.

Q. Mention one of them.

A. One of them, named Peter, was beaten with cudgels, and then burned slowly on a gridiron. After this martyrdom, blood flowed in streams through all the provinces.

Q. What was the intention of Diocletian?

A. The intention of Diocletian was to efface the very name of Christianity. For this purpose, he had idols placed in the streets, at the fountains, in the public squares, and in the market places, and whosoever came to draw water or to buy anything, or even chanced to pass the way, was obliged to sacrifice.

Q. What Martyrs suffered in this persecution?

A. Innumerable Martyrs suffered in this persecution: among them, St. Julitta and her son, St. Cyr.

Q. Who was St. Julitta?

A. St. Julitta was of the city of Iconium, and of the royal race. She fled to the city of Tarsus, in Cilicia, with her son, St. Cyr, then three years old, and two servant-maids.

Q. What happened to her at Tarsus?

A. The governor, named Alexander, had her arrested, and beaten severely with ox-sinews. At the same time, he took St. Cyr in his arms, and tried to caress him, but the young Martyr scraped the governor's face with his little hands, and, as often as St. Julitta said, "I am a Christian," he repeated, "I am a Christian."

Q. What did the judge do?

A. The barbarous judge threw down the innocent victim from the tribunal. His head was broken by the fall, and he died bathed in his blood. St. Julitta thanked God for the victory granted to her son, and was beheaded.

Prayer, p. 224.

NINETEENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. TENTH PERSECUTION, CONTINUED. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

Q. RELATE the history of St. Phocas.

A. St. Phocas was a gardener, a man of patriarchal simplicity and innocence. His garden and little cabin afforded him the means of practising charity and hospitality. The governor of the province sent some soldiers to put him to death. Having arrived, without knowing it, at the house of Phocas, who offered them a lodging, they begged him to inform them where they might find a certain Phocas whom they had orders to kill.

Q. What did the Saint reply?

A. The Saint replied that he would satisfy them on the matter, and next morning said, "I have found Phocas: I am he; I do not fear death." They then killed him.

Q. What are the particulars of the martyrdom of SS. Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus?

A. St. Tarachus was an old soldier, sixty-five years of age when he was arrested. St. Probus had once been a very rich man, but he renounced all his goods the better to serve Our Lord. St. Andronicus was a young man of one of the chief families of Ephesus.

Q. By whom were they arrested?

A. They were arrested by Maximus, governor of Cilicia, who asked them their names and their profession. They answered, "We are Christians: this is our name and our profession."

Q. What tortures did he put them to?

A. He caused their teeth to be broken, their sides to be torn with iron combs, their hands to be pierced with red hot nails, and the skin to be pulled off their heads, on which burning coals were then laid. But, finding that he could not change their resolution, he condemned them to be exposed to wild beasts.

Q. What was their death?

A. On the day of the shows a bear and a lioness of enormous size were let loose upon them. The roaring of these fierce animals made all the spectators tremble; but they went over quietly to the holy Martyrs, and, lying down before them, began to lick their feet.

Q. What did Maximus do?

A. Maximus, confounded, ordered the holy Martyrs to be beheaded. The Christians carried off their bodies during the night, and buried them in a rocky cavern.

Q. Were there any other remarkable Martyrs at this time?

A. While the blood of Martyrs was flowing in the East, it was also moistening the provinces of the West. Two young virgins, of illustrious birth, and heiresses of large fortunes, won a glorious victory at this time. They were SS. Agnes and Eulalia.

Q. Who was St. Agnes?

A. St. Agnes was scarcely thirteen years of age, when the governor of Rome asked her in marriage for his son; but she answered that she was promised to a heavenly spouse. It was hereby understood that she was a Christian, and she was sentenced to die.

Q. How did she meet death?

A. Without being at all concerned at the display of instruments of torture, she received the stroke of death joyfully amid the tears of the spectators.

Q. Who was St. Eulalia?

A. St. Eulalia was born at Merida, in Spain. Being about thirteen years old, she presented herself before Dacian, the governor of the pro-

vince, and reproached him for the impiety with which he sought to destroy the true religion. Dacian ordered her sides to be torn with red hot iron hooks.

Q. What did the Saint say?

A. The Saint counted her wounds, and said calmly, "Thou art written on me, O Lord! Thy victories are engraven with iron on my body! How I love to read them so written!" At length, the tyrant caused her to be burned alive.

Prayer, p. 238.

TWENTIETH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT remark do you make on the history of the Martyrs?

A. I remark on the history of the Martyrs that God took care to choose them from all the countries of the world, in order to show the Unity and Catholicity of the Faith in all ages and conditions of life, hereby teaching us that every age and condition has given Saints to Heaven, and may still give them if people only desire it.

Q. What remark do you make on the death of the persecutors?

A. I remark on the death of the persecutors that it is a visible proof of the justice of God, and a lesson for us.

Q. How so?

A. Because the punishment with which they were struck in this life teaches us to fear God, and this fear strengthens religion. Thus do Martyrs and tyrants all contribute in their way to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Q. Who gave peace to the Church?

A. Constantine, son of Cæsar Constantius Chlorus, gave peace to the Church. He was converted by seeing in the sky a bright cross, on which were the words, "In this sign thou shalt conquer."

Q. What happened?

A. The following night, Our Lord appeared to Constantine, told him to make a standard like that which he had seen, and promised him victory. Constantine obeyed, won the victory, entered Rome, and declared himself the protector of Religion, to which he gave peace and freedom in the year 313.

Q. What did Religion do on gaining her freedom?

A. On gaining her freedom, Religion changed all the laws, and made them easy and just. She abolished slavery, polygamy, divorce, and the right of selling or killing children; in a word, she relieved all kinds of human misery.

Prayer, p. 246.

TWENTY-FIRST LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. DIVINITY OF RELIGION.

Q. WHAT does the establishment of Christianity prove?

A. The establishment of Christianity proves that Religion is the work of God.

Q. How does it prove this?

A. It proves this by the difficulties of the enterprise, the weakness of the means, and the greatness of the success.

Q. What were the difficulties of the enterprise?

A. The difficulties of the enterprise were the greatest that can be imagined: Judaism and Paganism had to be destroyed and Christianity substituted for them. Moreover, this revolution was to be effected throughout the whole world, and in the Augustan age, the most polished and corrupt ever known.

Q. Did anything else increase the difficulties of the enterprise?

A. Yes, the enterprise was to be accomplished in spite of philosophers, who attacked all the truths of Christianity; in spite of play-actors, who turned them into ridicule on the stage; and, in spite of emperors, who put to death in the midst of the most frightful torments all who adhered to them.

Q. What means had been chosen to attain success in this enterprise?

A. To attain success in this enterprise, the weakest means that could be found had been chosen.

Q. Name them.

A. Twelve men of the common people, twelve fishermen, without education, without money, without patronage, and, what is worse, Jews by birth, consequently odious and contemptible in the sight of the whole world.

Q. What was the success of the enterprise?

A. The success of the enterprise was the most wonderful ever seen: it was rapid, perilous, real, and permanent.

Q. Why do you say a rapid success?

A. I say a rapid success, because in a few years Religion spread to all parts of the world, even Rome, where it counted, under the sway of Nero, an immense multitude of disciples.

Q. Why do you say perilous?

A. I say perilous, because, in becoming a Christian, there was question of devoting oneself to hatred, poverty, exile, imprisonment, and the most frightful death; and millions of persons, of all ages and countries, did so devote themselves.

Q. Why do you say real?

A. I say real, because Christianity changed all things—ideas, manners, laws, souls, society.

Q. Why do you say permanent?

A. I say permanent, because nothing can destroy Christianity—neither tyrants, nor the wicked, nor heretics, nor revolutions, nor time itself, which destroys all things else.

Prayer, p. 264.

TWENTY-SECOND LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED. ALL OBJECTIONS DESTROYED OR RATHER TURNED INTO PROOFS.

Q. WHAT follows, in the eyes of reason, from the establishment of Christianity?

A. It follows, in the eyes of reason, from the establishment of Christianity, that (1) for eighteen hundred years the world has been adoring a Crucified Jew, that is to say, all that is most odious and despicable.

Q. What else?

A. It follows that (2) by adoring this Crucified Jew the world has become much more enlightened, much more virtuous, much more free, much more perfect.

Q. Anything else?

A. It follows that (3) all nations come forth from barbarism and degradation only by adoring the Crucified Jew; that all who refuse to adore Him remain in barbarism; and that all who cease to adore Him relapse into barbarism.

Q. Is this fact incredible?

A. This fact is most incredible, and yet most certain.

Q. How do you explain it?

A. Catholics explain it by saying that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, was God Himself. He triumphed without difficulty over obstacles, and communicated to the world His lights and graces: He wrought miracles. All is thus easily explained.

Q. What do the impious say?

A. The impious say that there was no miracle; that Our Lord was not God, but a Jew like any other Jew, and that the conversion of the world was quite a natural thing.

Q. What does all this mean?

A. All this means that, in order to change the religion of the whole world, it is enough to take a man, to crucify him, and to send out twelve others saying that he was God: an experiment which the impious ought to try, if they wish to convince us.

Q. What else does it mean

A. It also means that the impious, in order not to believe miracles are obliged to maintain the greatest of absurdities; for the world, converted without a miracle by twelve Jews, and adoring a crucified Jew any other than God, is the greatest absurdity imaginable.

Q. What follows hence?

A. It follows hence that Religion, which could not be established by the power of men, must have been established by the power of God, and accordingly is true; for God cannot authorise deceit.

Q. What else follows?

A. It also follows that all objections against Religion are false; for there cannot be contradictory truths.

Q. Does anything more follow?

A. It follows lastly that all objections against Religion are so many proofs of its divinity; for all show the extreme difficulty of commending it to the approbation of the world, consequently the necessity and the force of those miracles which obliged the world to accept it, in spite of all the passions and all kinds of persecutions.

Prayer, p. 277.

TWENTY-THIRD LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ARIUS. ST. ATHANASIUS. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

Q. WHAT are the means by which Our Lord preserves and propagates Religion?

A. The means by which Our Lord preserves and propagates Religion are, (1) Priests; (2) Saints; (3) Religious Orders; and (4) Missions.

Q. Who are the first defenders of Religion?

A. The first defenders of Religion are Priests. The Priest is appointed to teach the truth, so as to oppose error; to give good example, so as to oppose scandal; and to relieve all human miseries, so as to prevent man from becoming as wretched as he was under paganism.

Q. Who are the second defenders of Religion?

A. The second defenders of Religion are Great Saints, who appear whenever the evils and dangers of the Church are more serious, and who are appointed to defend the truth, or to give good example, or to relieve human miseries. Hence, three kinds of Saints: Apologists, Contemplatives, and Infirmarians or Hospitallers.

Q. To what are all these means of defence reduced?

A. All these means of defence are reduced to one, namely, the Church; for it is in the Church and by the Church that Priests are consecrated, and that Saints and Religious Orders are formed.

Q. What are the means established by Our Lord to propagate Religion?

A. The means established by Our Lord to propagate Religion are Missions, which take place chiefly when any people render themselves unworthy of Religion, so that the Church may gain new children, and be indemnified for those whom she has lost.

Q. Did the Church enjoy peace after the persecutions?

A. The Church did not enjoy peace after the persecutions; for she must always, like Our Lord, be the object of new attacks.

Q. Who was her first enemy?

A. Her first enemy was Arius, who dared to deny the divinity of Our Lord; but he was condemned at the General Council of Nice, and sent into exile, from which he returned only to die a shameful death.

Q. Who was the great defender of truth against the Arians?

A. The great defender of truth against the Arians was St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, in Egypt. He had much to suffer for the good cause during his life, which was very long, and which closed with a holy death in the year of Our Lord 373.

Q. How did Our Lord repair the losses that heresy had caused to His Church?

A. Our Lord repaired the losses that heresy had caused to His Church by giving it new peoples: St. Frumentius carried the light of Faith to Abyssinia, which embraced Religion with much ardour, and a poor woman, a Christian slave, converted the nation of the Iberians.

Prayer, p. 290.

TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. HILARY, ST. MARTIN, ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN, AND ST. BASIL. (FOURTH CENTURY.)

Q. WHO was St. Hilary

A. St. Hilary was Bishop of Poitiers. He was raised up by God to defend the Western Church from Arianism, while St. Athanasius was defending the Eastern.

Q. Who was the most illustrious disciple of St. Hilary?

A. The most illustrious disciple of St. Hilary was the great St Martin. Son of a military tribune, Martin found himself obliged to enter the army; but he knew how to practise all virtues there, especially charity towards the poor.

Q. What did he do afterwards?

A. He afterwards attached himself to St. Hilary, founded the first

monastery known in Gaul, was consecrated Bishop of Tours, and converted a great many Pagans, who indemnified the Church for the losses caused to her by heresy.

Q. What was then occurring in the East?

A. While St. Hilary was defending and St. Martin propagating Religion in the West, the emperor Julian the Apostate was trying to re-establish paganism in the East.

Q. By what means?

A. By passing laws in favour of paganism, and, that he might give the lie to Our Lord, by undertaking to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, but whirlwinds of flames came forth from the ground and obliged the workmen to cease their attempt.

Q. What was the effect of this miracle?

A. This miracle, attested by a pagan author, filled the Catholics with joy, and enraged the apostate prince, who swore to have revenge on Jesus Christ; but some time afterwards he was mortally wounded in battle.

Q. What did he do then?

A. Foaming with rage, he took a handful of blood from his wound, and, throwing it up towards heaven, cried out, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" This was the name that he gave Our Lord, and his words were the last cry of expiring paganism.

Q. How did God support His Church?

A. God supported His Church by first taking care Himself to confound Julian the Apostate, and then by raising up great Doctors who wrote against him as well as against Arianism, which was extending its ravages from day to day. Among those eminent Doctors, we must rank St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Basil the Great.

Q. Who was St. Gregory Nazianzen?

A. St. Gregory Nazianzen was born at Nazianzen, a city of Cappadocia, of Christian parents, who trained him to virtue, and sent him to study at Athens, where he bound himself in close friendship with St. Basil.

Q. What was the fruit of this friendship?

A. The fruit of this friendship, which ought to serve us as a model, was to strengthen both of them against bad example, and to hasten their progress in virtue and learning.

Q. What eulogium was passed on them?

A. This eulogium was passed on them, that they knew only two streets in the city, one leading to the church and the other to the public schools.

Q. What did St. Gregory become?

A. St. Gregory became Archbishop of Constantinople, had much to suffer from heretics, and retired into solitude, where he composed some beautiful works, which are the glory and the treasure of the Church.

Q. Who was St. Basil?

A. St. Basil was of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, of a family still more illustrious by its sanctity than by its nobility. Having reached a mature age, he sought out a solitude, and founded many religious houses, of women as well as of men, to whom he gave a number of wise rules. On this account he is regarded as one of the four Patriarchs of Religious Orders.

Q. Did he remain always in solitude?

A. He did not remain always in solitude. Appointed, in spite of himself, Archbishop of Cæsarea, he was one of the pillars of the Church against Arianism, and made the emperor Valens tremble. He died at the age of fifty-one years, so poor that he did not leave enough to buy a tombstone for himself.

Prayer, p. 303.

TWENTY-FIFTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. HILARION, ST. AMBROSE, ST. AUGUSTINE. SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL. (FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES.)

Q. WHAT happened at the close of the fourth century?

A. At the close of the fourth century, schism and heresy occasioned a multitude of disorders. Great Saints then retired into the desert, so as to do penance for the sins of the world and to obtain victory for the Church. Among the number was St. Hilarion.

Q. Who was St. Hilarion?

A. St. Hilarion was born in Palestine, of wealthy but idolatrous parents. At fifteen years of age he retired into the desert, where he lived to the age of eighty-four years amid incredible austerities.

Q. What did he say when dying?

A. When dying, he said to his soul, "What dost thou fear, my soul? For seventy years thou hast been serving Jesus Christ: why shouldst thou fear death?"

Q. What new heresy broke out in those days?

A. In those days the heresy of Macedonius broke out: he denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. He was condemned by the Council of Constantinople, which added a few words to the Nicene Creed, the better to explain what should be believed regarding the Holy Ghost. This is the Creed that is sung at Mass.

Q. After the condemnation of Macedonius, did the Church enjoy peace?

A. After the condemnation of Macedonius, the Church did not enjoy peace; for the followers of this heretic, as well as the Arians, kept spreading their errors. But God raised up Doctors to confound them: among others, SS. Ambrose and Augustine.

Q. Who was St. Ambrose?

A. St. Ambrose was son of a prefect of Gaul, and was made Bishop of Milan, notwithstanding his tears and his resistance. He crushed the heresy of the Arians in his diocese, and always showed himself a firm defender of the cause of God.

Q. On what particular occasion did his firmness appear?

A. His firmness appeared particularly in the conduct which he observed towards Theodosius. This emperor, having caused a massacre of seven thousand of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, was so bold as to go to the church. But St. Ambrose stopped him at the door, and laid a public penance on him, to which he humbly submitted.

Q. Who was St. Augustine?

A. St. Augustine was born at Tagaste, in Africa. His mother was St. Monica, and his father Patricius. The latter was a pagan, but was converted by the prayers of his virtuous wife. Augustine, in his youth, gave himself up to all kinds of disorders, from which he was drawn by St. Ambrose and his mother St. Monica.

Q. What did he do after his conversion?

A. After his conversion, he retired to the country, became Bishop of Hippo, and confounded the schismatics, heretics, and pagans, who were all together attacking the Church. Like St. Ambrose, he sold the sacred vessels in order to ransom captives, and died so poor that it was needless for him to make a will.

Prayer, p. 315.

TWENTY-SIXTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. CHRYSOSTOM, ST. JEROME, ST. ARSENIUS. THIRD AND FOURTH GENERAL COUNCILS. (FIFTH CENTURY CONTINUED.)

Q. Who were the other holy Doctors that God raised up to defend Religion in the fifth century?

A. In the fifth century, God raised up a great many other Doctors to defend Religion, such as St Cyril of Alexandria, St. Isidore of Pelusium, St. Epiphanius, and especially St. Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, and St Jerome.

Q. Who was St. Chrysostom?

A. St. John Chrysostom was son of a general of the Roman army He was born at Antioch and brought up in piety by his virtuous mother. He became so skilled in eloquence that he changed the face of his native city.

Q. How was he made Patriarch of Constantinople?

A. The emperor Arcadius had him carried off and consecrated Archbishop of Constantinople. Here the Saint displayed the same zeal as at Antioch, and with the same success. But heretics and other wicked persons caused him to be sent into exile, where he died in 407.

Q. Who was St. Jerome?

A. St. Jerome, born in Pannonia, was sent to Rome in order to perfect himself in the sciences. He forgot for some time the good principles which he had received from his family; but, returning to himself, he was baptised, and thenceforth devoted himself wholly to prayer and study.

Q. To what place did he retire?

A. He retired to Bethlehem, where he spent the rest of his life in great austerity. This did not prevent him from refuting heretics and schismatics, and enlightening the Church by many learned works.

Q. Who were the principal solitaries of the fifth century?

A. The principal solitaries of the fifth century were St. Nilus, St. Simon Stylites, St. Arsenius, and St. Gerasimus, who strove by their prayers in the desert to obtain victory for the Church, and to turn away the scourges of the divine anger.

Q. Who was St. Arsenius?

A. St. Arsenius was first the tutor of the children of the emperor Theodosius. After spending eleven years at the court, he retired into the desert, where he led, to the age of ninety-five, a truly evangelical life. He used often to say to himself, "Arsenius, why didst thou leave the world? why didst thou come hither?"

Q. Acquaint us with St. Gerasimus.

A. St. Gerasimus fixed his abode in Palestine, on the banks of the Jordan, and there founded a very celebrated laura.

Q. What is a laura?

A. A laura is a habitation of solitaries It consists of a number of cells, apart from one another, and ranged in the shape of a circle, with a church in the centre.

Q. How did these holy solitaries live?

A. These holy solitaries lived in perpetual silence, every one in his own cell, occupied with prayer and manual labour. On Sunday only, they all met in the church to partake of the holy mysteries.

Q. Were there any General Councils held in the fifth century?

A. There were two General Councils held in the fifth century: that of Ephesus, in 431, which condemned Nestorius; and that of Chalcedon, in 451, which condemned Eutyches.

Q. How did God punish the sins of the heretics and pagans?

A. During the fifth century, God punished the sins of the heretics and pagans by calling forth against the Roman empire hosts of barbarians, led on by terrible commanders: Attila, king of the Huns, and Alaric, king of the Visigoths. Pope St. Leo saved Rome twice from their fury.

Prayer, p. 328.

TWENTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. PATRICK, ST CLOTILDA, ST. BENEDICT. FIFTH GENERAL COUNCIL. (FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES.)

Q. What remark do you make on the fifth century?

A. I remark on the fifth century that at the moment when heresies were afflicting the Church in the East, new peoples were being converted in the West.

Q. Who were those peoples?

A. Those peoples were the Irish and the French.

Q. Who was the Apostle of Ireland?

A. The Apostle of Ireland was St. Patrick. He was born in England, and, when about fifteen years old, was carried off by a party of barbarians. They took him to Ireland, and made him a herd.[1]

Q. Did God deliver him?

A. God delivered him, and, having arrived in his own country, he resolved to return to Ireland and to preach the Faith there. Pope Celestine made him a Bishop, and sent him to Ireland, which he had the happiness of converting almost entirely to Catholicity.

Q. Who was the Apostle of the French?

A. The Apostle of the French or the Franks was St. Clotilda, wife of Clovis, their king. She strove by all kinds of virtues to gain her husband to Jesus Christ; but from day to day he deferred making any change. At length the moment of grace arrived.

Q. On what occasion?

A. In a battle with the Germans, Clovis saw his army thrown into confusion and himself exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of his enemies. He then invoked the God of Clotilda, promising to adore Him if he should win the victory. His prayer was heard. Having returned to Rheims, he was baptised by St. Remigius, Bishop of this city, with a great many of his officers.

Q. What was the end of St. Clotilda?

A. St. Clotilda, her dearest wishes crowned, retired after the death of her husband to the city of Tours, near the tomb of St. Martin. Here she died, full of days and merits, on the 3rd of June, 545. She and St Monica are the models of Christian wives and mothers.

Q. Who was St. Benedict?

A. St. Benedict was the founder of the Benedictines, and the first Patriarch of Religious Orders in the West.

Q. Where was St. Benedict born?

A. St. Benedict was born in Italy, and studied for a time at Rome;

[1] See Note, p. 330. (*Tr.*)

but, fearing to lose his innocence in that city, he retired to the desert of Subiaco, near Mount Cassino, where he founded the celebrated monastery that bears his name.

Q. Did he found any others?

A. He founded many others, and drew up for them a rule full of wisdom. Its first article permitted the reception of all classes of persons into the Order, thus affording a refuge to such as wished to escape the invasions of the barbarians.

Q. What services have the Benedictines rendered to the world?

A. The Benedictines have rendered the greatest services to the world. They have cleared immense provinces, handed down works of antiquity, edified the Church, and spread the Faith through whole nations.

Q. What General Council was held in the sixth century?

A. In the sixth century—553—the second General Council of Constantinople was held: it condemned several heresies.

Prayer, p. 339.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. AUGUSTINE, APOSTLE OF ENGLAND; ST. JOHN THE ALMONER. (SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES.)

Q. How was England converted?

A. A young Deacon, named Gregory, was one day passing through the market-place of Rome. Here he saw some slaves of great beauty, exposed for sale. He learned that they were from Great Britain, and still pagans. "What a pity," he exclaimed, "that such beautiful creatures should be the slaves of the devil!"

Q. What did he do afterwards?

A. Having become Pope, under the name of Gregory the Great, he sent over to England St. Augustine, Prior of a convent of Benedictines in Rome, with forty missionaries, who all landed safe. They proceeded as far as Canterbury, of which place Augustine became Bishop.

Q. Did they make many conversions?

A. The pagans were converted in crowds, struck by the splendour of the virtues and miracles of their apostles. The king himself asked for Baptism, and in a little while all Great Britain was Christian. Thus did Our Lord indemnify the Church for the losses that heresy was causing her in the East.

Q. What happened in the beginning of the seventh century?

A. In the beginning of the seventh century, the justice of God was exercised on the empire of the Parthians, who, from the birth of Christianity, had never ceased to persecute Christians.

Q. How did it fill up the measure of its iniquities?

A. The Parthians or Persians filled up the measure of their iniquities by falling on Palestine, and on Jerusalem, which they put to fire and sword, and by possessing themselves of a portion of the True Cross, which they carried away to Armenia, after killing a great many Christians and reducing the rest to the most frightful misery.

Q. How did Our Lord come to the relief of His afflicted children?

A. Our Lord came to the relief of His afflicted children by humbling their enemies, and by raising up for them a man who sympathised very much with them, and assisted them in numberless ways, even to the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Q. Who was this man?

A. This man, who may be called the Eastern St. Vincent de Paul, was St. John, Patriarch of Alexandria, in Egypt, whose charity merited for him the surname of the Almoner.

Prayer, p. 348.

TWENTY-NINTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. JOHN THE ALMONER, CONTINUED. THE TRUE CROSS RESTORED. (SEVENTH CENTURY.)

Q. CONTINUE the history of St. John the Almoner.

A. St. John the Almoner forgave injuries as readily as he bestowed alms. One day a senator, named Nicetas, wanted to take possession of some property that belonged to the church and the poor of Alexandria. The Saint opposed it. The senator then grew angry.

Q. What did the Saint do?

A. The Saint had no sooner returned home than he sent word to Nicetas: "Brother, the sun is going to set." The senator understood this, and came to the holy Patriarch. They knelt down before each other, prayed together, and embraced; and ever afterwards the greatest friendship existed between them.

Q. What was the resignation of the holy Patriarch?

A. At a time when he had the greatest need of a plentiful supply, he learned that thirteen vessels laden with grain and valuable merchandise belonging to the church of Alexandria had been wrecked. He received this blow from Providence with all the resignation of the holy man Job, and was rewarded like him.

Q. What was his detachment?

A. His detachment was such that he lived in a small cell, where his only bed was the bare ground and a wretched woollen coverlet, torn in many places. A wealthy citizen of Alexandria bought him a new one, of which he begged him to make use for his sake. The Saint agreed reluctantly.

Q. What occurred the following night?

A. The following night the Saint could not sleep, and might be heard repeating every moment, "Who would think that the humble John had over him a coverlet that cost thirty-six pieces of silver? How many poor people there are that have not a rush mat to lie on! God be praised! it is the first and the last time for me to use this coverlet." And next morning he sold it.

Q. Where did St. John the Almoner die?

A. St. John the Almoner, having reached a great age, died in the island of Cyprus, leaving as his whole fortune one single piece of money, which he desired to be given to the poor.

Q. How did God punish the Persians, who had laid waste Jerusalem?

A. God punished in a most remarkable manner the Persians who had laid waste Jerusalem. The emperor Heraclius first gave the death-blow to their empire by a great victory that he won over them, after which their king, Chosroes, who had taken Jerusalem and carried off the True Cross, was murdered by his own son.

Q. What became of the True Cross?

A. The True Cross was restored, still enclosed in its case, with the seal of the Patriarch of Jerusalem thereon: it was carried back in triumph to this city.

Prayer, p. 357.

THIRTIETH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. SOPHRONIUS. SIXTH GENERAL COUNCIL. ST. WILLIBRORD. (SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES.)

Q. WHO gave the last blow to the empire of the Persians?

A. The last blow was given to the empire of the Persians by Mahomet. Mahomet was born at Mecca, a town in Arabia, of obscure parents. Crimes cost him nothing when he hoped to satisfy his passions. In order to rule more securely over the Arabs, of whom a great many were still idolators, he determined to give them a religion.

Q. What was his religion?

A. Mahomet's religion was an absurd mixture of Christianity, Judaism, and idolatry. It taught that man is not free. It authorised the most shameful sins, and promised sensual pleasures to its followers as their reward in eternity.

Q. What did this religion produce?

A. This religion produced degradation and corruption, slavery and barbarity. Whereas, the Christian Religion purified morals, abolished slavery, and civilised nations.

Q. How did Mahomet establish his religion?

A. Mahomet established his religion with the sword. He said, "Believe or die!" It was to violence and the love of pleasure that Mahomet owed his success. Whereas, the Apostles established the Christian Religion by putting a bridle on all the passions of man, and letting themselves be slaughtered.

Q. Is the religion of Mahomet one?

A. While the Christian Religion is one, Mahometanism is divided into a multitude of sects: we count more than sixty of them.

Q. What was the end of Mahomet?

A. A Jewish woman, wishing to make sure whether Mahomet was really a prophet as he said, poisoned a shoulder of mutton that she was serving up to him. The pretended prophet did not perceive anything wrong until after he had eaten of it, and died miserably.

Q. How did the empire of the Persians come to an end?

A. Omar, one of Mahomet's lieutenants, declared war against the Persians, slew their last king, and destroyed their empire; after which, the Mahometans reduced to slavery all the provinces of the East that had embraced heresy.

Q. What other calamity afflicted the Church?

A. Another calamity that afflicted the Church was the heresy of the Monothelites. These heretics pretended that there is only one will, though two natures, in Our Lord. They were condemned by the Sixth General Council, held at Constantinople in 680.

Q. How did God console the Church?

A. God consoled the Church by the angelic lives of a great many Saints, who repaired the scandals and crimes occasioned by heresy: of this number was St. Anastasius, a solitary of Mount Sinai.

Q. How did God repair the losses of the Church?

A. God repaired the losses that heresy and Mahometanism were causing to the Church by converting new peoples, such as the Frisons, the Dutch, and some of the Danes. The Missionary who bore the Gospel to them was St. Willibrord, an English Benedictine, sent by Pope Sergius.

Prayer, p. 367.

THIRTY-FIRST LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. BONIFACE. MARTYRDOM OF THE MONKS OF LERINS, AND OF ST. STEPHEN, A SOLITARY. (EIGHTH CENTURY.)

Q. Did the Church make any other conquests?

A. The Church made other conquests more extensive All Germany was converted at the voice of St. Boniface, an English Benedictine, whom the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory II., sent to preach the Gospel throughout the North of Europe.

Q. What did the Saint do after receiving his mission?

A. After receiving his mission, the Saint converted the Bavarians, the remainder of the Frisons, and a part of the Saxons, and, in order to secure the fruits of his labours, founded the celebrated abbey of Fulda, a nursery of great and holy men, who led the Germans along the paths of civilisation, after having made them Christians.

Q. How did St. Boniface die?

A. St. Boniface, having been consecrated Archbishop of Mayence, converted a great many more idolators, and received from the hands of barbarians the crown of martyrdom, which he had long desired.

Q. From whom had the Church much to suffer?

A. The Church, joyful at the conversion of Germany, had much to suffer from the Saracens or Mahometans. They passed over from Africa into Spain, and thence into France, burning and slaughtering all before them.

Q. By whom were they brought to a stand-still?

A. They were brought to a stand-still by Charles Martel, a French prince. He defeated them in a bloody battle fought near Poitiers. But, before and during this invasion, great disorders had taken place: there was need of victims to expiate them.

Q. Who were those victims?

A. Those victims were a great many holy Bishops and Religious living at that time, and especially the glorious Martyrs whose blood flowed under the swords of the Saracens: among whom we should not omit to mention the Religious of Luxeuil in Franche-Comté and those of Lerins.

Q. What else had the Church to suffer during this century?

A. The Church had also to suffer during this century the impieties of the Iconoclasts or Image-breakers. They were heretics who, regarding as idolatrous the worship rendered to images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, set themselves to destroy all such images.

Q. Who was the author of this heresy?

A. The author of this heresy was the emperor Leo the Isaurian, who maintained it with the sword. His son Constantine did the same, and died miserably, struck by the hand of God.

Prayer, p. 375.

THIRTY-SECOND LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. JOHN DAMASCENE SEVENTH GENERAL COUNCIL. ST. ANSCHARIUS, ST. EULOGIUS. (EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES.)

Q. Who was the chief defender of holy images?

A. The chief defender of holy images was St. John, surnamed Damascene, from Damascus, the place of his birth. He was here brought up with great care by a holy religious, whom his father had ransomed from the slavery of the Saracens.

Q. What did he become after the death of his father?

A. After the death of his father, he became governor of Damascus. But the fear of losing his soul amid honours and riches made him retire to the laura of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem. Here he composed his works against the heresy of the Iconoclasts, which was condemned by the seventh General Council, held at Nice in 787.

Q. How did God punish the emperors of Constantinople?

A. God punished the emperors of Constantinople by taking from them the empire of the West, and giving it to Charlemagne, who soon made science and religion flourish again and brought about the conversion of the Saxons.

Q. What other conversions followed?

A. The conversions of the Danes and Swedes followed, and thus were repaired the losses inflicted on the Church by heretics and Mahometans.

Q. Who was the Apostle of the Danes and Swedes?

A. The Apostle of the Danes and Swedes was St. Anscharius, a Benedictine religious, of the abbey of Corbie.

Q. Were there any Martyrs at this period?

A. There were a great many Martyrs at this period in Spain, where the Saracens had determined to destroy Christianity: the most illustrious was St. Eulogius.

Q. Who was he?

A. He was a holy Priest, full of faith and very learned. He had advised a young Christian maiden, whose father and mother were Mahometans, to quit the parental roof, lest she should lose her faith. The Saracens, enraged, put him to death, and, four days afterwards, gave the crown of martyrdom to the young maiden.

Q. Was the blood of these Martyrs a seed of Christians?

A The blood of these Martyrs was a seed of Christians; for it was shortly after their death that the nation of the Bulgarians embraced Religion: the sight of a picture of the Last Judgment struck their king with such fear that he asked for Baptism and became a fervent Christian.

Prayer, p. 384.

THIRTY-THIRD LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. EIGHTH GENERAL COUNCIL. CONVERSION OF THE RUSSIANS AND NORMANS. FOUNDATION OF THE ABBEY OF CLUNY. (NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES.)

Q. WHAT afflicted the Church towards the end of the ninth century?

A. Towards the end of the ninth century, the schism of Photius afflicted the Church. Photius was a powerful and arrogant man, who drove St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, from his see, and took possession of it himself, though only a layman.

Q. What did the Sovereign Pontiff do?

A. The Sovereign Pontiff assembled at Constantinople the eighth General Council, which condemned Photius and declared Ignatius the only lawful pastor. Order was restored; but there remained in the minds of some parties a spirit of bitterness, which, later on, gave rise to the schism of the Greeks.

Q. How was the Church consoled?

A. The Church was consoled by the conversion of the Russians, a barbarous people who had just made their appearance in the north of Europe. A holy Bishop set out to preach the Gospel to them. The Russians asked him for a miracle before they would be converted.

Q. What was the miracle?

A. They wished that he should throw the book of the Gospels into a large fire kindled by themselves, and promised to become Christians if it should not be burned. The miracle was wrought, and all the people asked for Baptism.

Q. What people were converted during the tenth century?

A. The Normans were converted during the tenth century. They were barbarians from the North, who had been ravaging Europe for more than a hundred years.

Q. Who was their chief Apostle?

A. Their chief Apostle was the Archbishop of Rouen. He converted their leader, named Rollo, who, after his baptism, laboured zealously for the conversion of his subjects.

Q. What new enemy had the Church to fight against?

A. The new enemy that the Church had to fight against was scandal, which had found its way among Christians and even into monasteries; but God raised up some great Saints, who made virtue flourish again.

Q. Who was the first?

A. The first was St. Odo, Abbot of Cluny, a celebrated abbey of the Order of St. Benedict, situated near Mâcon. He established a perfect regularity in this house, whence issued the happy reform that restored the Religious Orders to their early sanctity.

Prayer, p. 393.

THIRTY-FOURTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. GERARD, ST. ODO, ST. ADELAIDE OR ALICE. CONVERSION OF THE POLES. (TENTH CENTURY.)

Q. By whom was the reform of morals continued?

A. The reform of morals, begun at Cluny, was continued in Belgium by St. Gerard, a young nobleman, who, returning one day from the chase, stopped to pray in a lonely chapel and resolved to quit the world.

Q. Whither did he retire?

A. He retired to the abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, where he was ordained Priest, and sent back to Belgium to establish discipline.

Q. Who reformed England?

A. St. Odo, and after him St. Dunstan, both Archbishops of Canterbury, reformed England. Their efforts were crowned with great success; and, in spite of the wiles of the devil, Religion triumphed everywhere.

Q. Show this last fact more clearly.

A. While virtue was flourishing again in monasteries and among the clergy, St. Wenceslas, duke of Bohemia, St. Edward, king of England, St. Matilda, queen of Germany, and St. Adelaide, empress, were reforming by their example the peoples subject to them.

Q. Continue your answer.

A. At the same time the Church saw coming to her the Basques, a people occupying the frontiers of France and Spain, and the Poles, who were indebted for the light of the Gospel to one of their princesses.

Q. What were the other consolations of the Church?

A. The other consolations of the Church were the extraordinary virtues of St. Paul of Latra, a celebrated anchoret of the East, who, during a long life, atoned for the iniquities of the world by austerities like those of the most renowned solitaries.

Prayer, p. 401.

THIRTY-FIFTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. BRUNO, ST. WILLIAM, ST. PETER DAMIAN, ST. GREGORY VII. (ELEVENTH CENTURY.)

Q. Who were the reformers of morals in Germany?

A. The reformers of morals in Germany were St. Bruno and St. William. The former was brother of the emperor Otho, and Archbishop of Mayence. He revived the love of knowledge and the practice of virtue, which consoled the Church as much as previous scandals had afflicted her.

Q. Who was St. William?

A. St. William was Abbot of Hirsauge. He revived piety in that celebrated abbey, and reformed more than a hundred monasteries.

Q. Whence had the reform of the Religious and the Clergy come?

A. The Reform of the Religious and the Clergy had come from the Sovereign Pontiffs. It was fit that such should be the case, since they were appointed by Our Lord to watch, not only over the flock, but also over the pastors.

Q. By whom were they aided?

A. They were aided by the Saints whom we have named, and espe cially by St. Peter Damian.

Q. Who was St. Peter Damian?

A. St. Peter Damian was an Italian by birth. He spent his childhood in tending his brother's flocks. Having become as great by his knowledge as by his virtue, he retired to a hermitage, where he gave himself up to all the austerities of penance.

Q. What happened?

A. Sovereign Pontiffs drew him forth from his obscurity. He was made Bishop and Cardinal. He devoted his whole life to the reform of the Clergy, and had the happiness of seeing his labours crowned with success.

Q. What was the chief cause of the scandals of those times?

A. The chief cause of the scandals of those times was investitures, that is to say, rights which temporal princes assumed of nominating to the dignities of the Church, without regard to ecclesiastical authority.

Q. Who offered the strongest opposition to this abuse?

A. He who offered the strongest opposition to this abuse was Pope St. Gregory VII. His firmness enabled him to rescue the Church out of the hands of the temporal powers, who were dishonouring it by the appointment of unworthy ministers. The whole world owes a debt of such profound gratitude to this holy Pope, who, by saving the Church, saved society, that Protestants themselves do honour to his name.

Prayer p. 417.

THIRTY-SIXTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE GREAT ST. BERNARD. FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF CAMALDOLI. LANFRANC, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. (ELEVENTH CENTURY.)

Q. Who were the principal Saints of the eleventh century?

A. Besides those whose history we have related, the other principal Saints of the eleventh century were St. Henry, emperor of Germany; St. Stephen, king of Hungary, and St. Emeric, his son; and St. Olaus, king of Norway. They all show us the effect of the reform of morals, and teach us that the Church is always full of life and vigour.

Q. What else teaches us this truth?

A. The institution of the Religious of the Great St. Bernard also teaches us the same truth.

Q. Who was its founder?

A. Its founder was St. Bernard of Menthon. He built on the summit of the Alps a hospice for the reception of travellers crossing those dangerous mountains: it is called the Hospice of the Great St. Bernard.

Q. What are the occupations of the Religious who live there?

A. Besides prayer, the occupations of the Religious who live there are to assist travellers, to search for them in the snow, to carry them to the convent, and to bestow on them all necessary care, either that they may be restored to life or may be able to continue their journey. These Religious lead a very austere life, and even shorten their days by breathing the sharp air of such cold mountains.

Q. What other institution was founded about the same time?

A. Another institution, founded about the same time, was the Order of Camaldoli, destined to set a high example of virtue and to atone for the sins of the world. St. Romuald, its founder, was an Italian nobleman, whose youth had not been very well regulated; but, touched by grace, he was converted, and practised great austerities in the desert.

Q. What was the effect of his sanctity?

A. The effect of his sanctity was to draw to him, as disciples, a number of young princes and lords, and many other persons.

Q. How do the Camaldolese live?

A. The Camaldolese live by the labour of their hands, and practise fasting, silence, prayer, in short, all the virtues of the ancient solitaries. This Order has given the Church a great many Saints and illustrious personages: among others, Pope Gregory XVI.

Q. What were the chief afflictions of the Church during this century?

A. The chief afflictions of the Church during this century were, (1) the heresy of Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, who dared to deny

the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, but was confounded by the celebrated Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury; (2) the schism of Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who fomented the seeds of division sown in minds by Photius; and (3) the persecutions of the Mahometans, who harassed the Christians of Egypt and Palestine.

Prayer, p. 426.

THIRTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. CONVERSION OF THE HUNGARIANS. TRUCE OF GOD. FOUNDATION OF THE CARTHUSIANS. (ELEVENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. How did God console the Church during the eleventh century?

A. During the eleventh century, God consoled the Church by the conversion of the Hungarians, a barbarous and most cruel people, who had ravaged Germany, Italy, and many other countries.

Q. How was this conversion effected?

A. This conversion was effected by one of their kings, who, having received Baptism, induced his subjects to follow his example. He brought up in religion his son Stephen, who became the Apostle of Hungary and was a great Saint.

Q. What other consolation did God give the Church?

A. God gave the Church another consolation in the establishment of the Truce of God, by which every kind of combat was forbidden from Wednesday evening till Monday morning, week after week. This peace was so much the more necessary, as the Christians were called on to unite in crusades against the Saracens.

Q. What were the Crusades?

A. The Crusades were wars undertaken by Christians to deliver the Holy Land from the yoke of the Saracens, and to prevent them from conquering the rest of the world and bringing it back to barbarism.

Q. Who was the first Apostle of the Crusades?

A. The first Apostle of the Crusades was a holy hermit, named Peter, of the diocese of Amiens, whom the Sovereign Pontiff engaged to travel through Europe for the purpose of prevailing on kings and nobles to march against the Saracens.

Q. What name did those take who engaged in this expedition?

A. Those who engaged in this expedition took the name of Crusaders, because they wore, as a distinctive mark, a cross of red stuff on the shoulder. The Crusaders captured Jerusalem, of which Godfrey de Bouillon was made king. There were six principal Crusades.

Q. What were the principal advantages of the Crusades?

A. The principal advantages of the Crusades were (1) to relieve Christians, enslaved to the infidels, and (2) to prevent the Saracens from gaining possession of Europe and bringing thereto what they had brought everywhere else—slavery, corruption, and barbarism.

Q. What Religious Order was founded at this time?

A. The Religious Order founded at this time was that of the Carthusians, called by God to expiate the scandals of the world and to obtain victory for their brethren.

Q. Who was the founder of the Carthusians?

A. The founder of the Carthusians was St. Bruno, chancellor of the Church of Rheims, who retired to a frightful desert, called Chartreuse, in the diocese of Grenoble, where he and his companions lived like Angels. St. Bruno died in 1101.

Prayer, p. 436.

THIRTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE ORDERS OF ST. ANTONY, THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN, AND THE KNIGHTS OF ST. LAZARUS. ST. BERNARD. (ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES.)

Q. WHAT was the Order of St. Antony?

A. The Order of St. Antony of Vienne was an Order instituted to relieve the sick attacked by *St. Antony's Fire*. This name was given to an unknown and terrible disease that ravaged Europe during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries.

Q. What other Religious Order was established in those times?

A. In those times the Order of the Knights of St. John was also established.

Q. What were their duties?

A. Their duties were to take care of the sick in hospitals and to fight against the Saracens. They made vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and swore never to count the number of their enemies.

Q. Were they alone devoted to the care of the sick and the fighting against infidels?

A. They were not. The Knights of St. Lazarus did the same, but their special employment was to wait on lepers.

Q. What kind of a man was Grand Master of this Order?

A. That lepers might be better cared for, the Grand Master of this Order should himself be a leper. Such admirable charity reminds us of Our Lord, who was pleased to take on Himself our infirmities that He might be more compassionate towards us

Q. What Saint was raised up to relieve the spiritual evils of Christians?

A. The Saint raised up to relieve the spiritual evils of Christians was St. Bernard, who banished scandals, confounded heresy, and consoled the Church.

Q. Where was he born?

A. He was born in the castle of Fontaines, near Dijon, and at the age of twenty-three entered the Cistercian Order with his brothers and thirty young noblemen whom he had gained to Jesus Christ.

Q. What did Bernard become at Citeaux?

A. At Citeaux, Bernard soon became the model of the community. He used to excite himself to virtue by this question: "Bernard, why hast thou come hither?" While yet young, he was sent, at the head of twelve other religious, to found the celebrated abbey of Clairvaux.

Q. Where is Clairvaux?

A. Clairvaux is in the diocese of Langres. It was a haunt of robbers. St. Bernard settled there, built cells, and soon saw around him five hundred religious, animated with the greatest devotion.

Q. What were St. Bernard's chief virtues?

A. St. Bernard's chief virtues were meekness towards others, severity towards himself, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He died at Clairvaux on the 20th of August, 1153, aged 63 years.

Prayer, p. 451.

THIRTY-NINTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF CONTEMPLATIVE ORDERS. FOUNDATION OF THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS AND THE RELIGIOUS OF THE TRINITY. (TWELFTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. How did God remedy the scandals that afflicted the Church during the twelfth century?

A. God remedied the scandals that afflicted the Church during the twelfth century by the establishment of new Contemplative Orders, by the example of many great Saints, and by the conversion of a large province of the North, called Pomerania.

Q. How did God defend the Church?

A. God defended the Church by Military Religious Orders: in the North, by the Teutonic Knights; in the East, by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and those of St. Lazarus; and in the South, by the Knights of St. James of the Sword, those of Calatrava, those of Alcantara, and those of Avis.

Q. What vow did these last mentioned Orders make?

A. These last mentioned Orders made a vow to defend the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. During several centuries, they were the rampart of Christendom, and the terror of the Saracens, who, notwithstanding their efforts, often made captives.

Q. How were these captives solaced?

A. These captives were solaced and ransomed by the Order of the Trinity, whose founder was St. John of Matha, a French Priest. God made known to him his vocation by a miracle, on the day that he said his first Mass.

Q. What was the miracle?

A. At the moment when he was raising the Sacred Host, an Angel appeared over the altar in the form of a young man, dressed in a white robe with a red and blue cross on his breast, and his hands resting on two captives. The Bishop of Paris sent St. John of Matha to Rome in order to inquire of the Sovereign Pontiff what was the will of God.

Q. What did the Sovereign Pontiff do?

A. The Sovereign Pontiff commanded fasting and prayer. He himself celebrated the holy mysteries, during which the very same miracle occurred. The Pope then told St. John of Matha to found a Religious Order for the redemption of captives who were groaning under the yoke of infidels.

Q. Did the Saint remain in Rome?

A. The Saint did not remain in Rome. He returned to France, built a monastery, collected alms, and sent two of his religious into Africa to ransom slaves. He also went there himself, and delivered a great many of them.

Prayer, p. 460.

FORTIETH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY GHOST COUNCIL OF LATERAN. CONVERSION OF THE RUGIANS. (TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES.)

Q. WHAT were the other Hospital Orders in the twelfth century?

A. The other Hospital Orders in the twelfth century were those of the Holy Ghost, Albrac, and the Pontiff Brothers.

Q. What was the Order of the Holy Ghost?

A. It was an Order instituted for the comfort of the sick. The most celebrated hospital of this Order is that of the Holy Ghost in Rome, in which several thousand sick people and abandoned children are provided for.

Q. What is placed near the monastery?

A. Near the monastery is a small turning-box, open to receive the abandoned child. It is forbidden, under the most severe penalties, to make any inquiries regarding the persons who deposit children here, or even to look after them in order to know whither they have gone.

Q. What was the Order of Albrac?

A. The Order of Albrac was one established in the South of France for the benefit of pilgrims. It consisted of Brothers, to take care of sick pilgrims; Knights, to escort them on their way and defend them from robbers; and Nuns, to wash their feet, clean their clothes, and make their beds.

Q. What were the duties of the Pontiff Brothers?

A. The duties of the Pontiff Brothers were, (1) to build bridges over rivers; (2) to have ferry-boats always in readiness; (3) to receive travellers, entertain them, and accompany them on their journey.

Q. What heretics appeared in the twelfth century?

A. In the twelfth century there appeared several kinds of heretics among others, the Waldenses, who sprang up at Lyons. They said tha it was forbidden to possess anything, and that all Christians were Priests

Q. In what Council were they condemned?

A. They were condemned in the eleventh General Council, held at Rome, in the Church of St. John Lateran. But, as their apparent sanctity deceived the people, God raised up among the people true Saints in order to show on which side was the true Church: of this number were St. Isidore, Patron of labourers, and St. Drogo, Patron of shepherds.

Q. What do you remark on the thirteenth century?

A. I remark on the thirteenth century that hell then attacked the Church with unparalleled fury; but God came to the relief of His Church.

Q. How?

A. He raised up great Saints, and caused the establishment of many Religious Orders, especially the four Mendicant Orders, that is to say, the Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians. They are called Mendicant, because they live on alms.

Prayer, p. 471.

FORTY-FIRST LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE FOUR MENDICANT ORDERS: CARMELITES, FRANCISCANS, DOMINICANS, AND AUGUSTINIANS. ST. THOMAS. (THIRTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. WHAT is the Order of the Carmelites?

A. The Order of the Carmelites is one devoted to preaching, study, and prayer. It took its rise in the East, and passed over to the West, for the help of the Church, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, when God was raising up another defender for the Church.

Q. Who was this defender?

A. This defender was St. Francis of Assisium, founder of the Franciscans. He was born in Italy, gave all his goods to the poor, becoming poor himself, and founded a new Order for the purpose of preaching, by word and example, the three great virtues of Christianity: detachment, mortification, and humility.

Q. What names are given to the religious of St. Francis?

A. The religious of St. Francis are called *Friars Minor*, that is, Lesser Brethren, out of humility; *Recollects*, because of the solitude and recollection in which they live; *Cordeliers*, from the cord with which they gird themselves; and *Capuchins*, on account of the peculiar shape of their habit.

Q. Who are the Dominicans?

A. The Dominicans or *Friars Preachers* are an Order founded by St. Dominic for the purpose of preaching the Gospel, converting heretics, and carrying the Faith to infidels.

Q. Where was St. Dominic born?

A. St. Dominic was born in Spain, of an illustrious family; came into France to combat the Albigensian heretics; and established the Holy Rosary.

Q. What was the fourth Order that God sent to the relief of the Church?

A. The fourth Order that God sent to the relief of the Church was that of the Augustinians, so called because the different congregations which united to form it adopted the rule of St. Augustine.

Q. Who was St. Thomas?

A. St. Thomas, sent by God to defend the truth, was born in Italy, and entered the Order of the Dominicans. His learning and sanctity soon became the subject of general admiration. He taught theology for a long time in Paris; wrote numerous works on theology and piety, including the *Office of the Blessed Sacrament;* and died at the age of forty-eight years.

Prayer, p. 483.

FORTY-SECOND LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. LOUIS. ST. FERDINAND GENERAL COUNCILS OF LATERAN AND LYONS. RELIGIOUS OF OUR LADY OF MERCY. (THIRTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. WHO was St. Louis?

A. St. Louis, King of France, was son of Louis VIII. He was born in the year 1221, and was baptised at Poissy. It was on this account that he used to sign his letters *Louis of Poissy*, showing that he preferred the title of Christian to that of King of France.

Q. What words used his mother the queen often to repeat to him?

A. While he was young, his mother, Queen Blanche, used often to repeat to him these beautiful words: "My son, I love you very tenderly; but I would rather see you dead at my feet than see you fall into mortal sin." Louis profited so well of these lessons, that all his life he preserved his baptismal innocence.

Q. What did he do when he became king?

A. When he became king, he applied himself to promote the interests of Religion and the happiness of his subjects. He set a splendid example of every virtue, arrested the progress of heresy, and drove scandal out of his kingdom.

Q. What did he do next?

A. He next gave his earnest support to the holy war that the Christians were waging against the infidels, and passed into the East, where he was made prisoner. He afterwards went to Africa again, and there died near Tunis, a truly Christian king, leaving to his son the most wholesome instructions.

Q. Who was St. Ferdinand?

A. St. Ferdinand was King of Castile and Leon. After the example of St. Louis, he defended the Church, beat off infidels, and edified the whole world.

Q. How else was the Church consoled?

A. The Church was also consoled by the conversion of Livonia, Cumania, and part of Prussia. Thus did she always gain on one side what she lost on the other.

Q. What General Councils were held during the thirteenth century?

A. The General Councils held during the thirteenth century were the Fourth of Lateran, and the First and Second of Lyons, in which the Church confirmed the good done by the Religious Bodies and the Saints of whom we have spoken, and endeavoured to bring back the Greeks to unity.

Q. What was the Order of Our Lady of Mercy?

A. The Order of Our Lady of Mercy was one instituted to ransom Christians out of the hands of infidels. Its members made a vow to remain in slavery, if necessary, for the deliverance of the captives. St. Peter Nolasco, a Frenchman like St. John of Matha, was its founder.

Prayer, p. 492.

FORTY-THIRD LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE CELLITE BROTHERS AND THE ORDER OF ST. BRIGIT. (FOURTEENTH CENTURY.)

Q. How was the Church attacked and defended during the fourteenth century?

A. During the fourteenth century the Church was attacked by various heresies, and by a schism that lasted forty years; but it was defended and consoled by new Religious Orders, by Saints, by Martyrs, and by the conversion of many peoples.

Q. Acquaint us with some of the Religious Orders of the fourteenth century.

A. The first of the Religious Orders of the fourteenth century is that of the Cellite Brothers, that is to say, Tomb Brothers or Burial Brothers, who took care of the sick, and also dressed the dead, buried them, and recited daily for them the Office of the Departed.

Q. What special vow did they make?

A. They made a special vow never to quit the bedside of the plague stricken, and thus proved the charity and sanctity of the true Church; for heretics never attempted such a thing.

Q. What was the Order of St. Brigit?

A. The Order of St. Brigit was established to gain for the Christian world the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, and her all-powerful aid against heresies. It owed its origin to St. Brigit, a Swedish princess, whose revelations may piously be believed.

Q. Who were the other defenders of the Church?

A. The other defenders of the Church during the fourteenth century were great Saints whom God raised up to prove, by the splendour of their virtues, the sanctity of the Catholic Church: among the number, St. Elzear and his wife St. Delphina.

Q. Who was St. Elzear?

A. St. Elzear was Count of Arrian. Pious, modest, agreeable in conversation, and valiant in war, he was a father to the poor and to his servants. St. Delphina, his wife, imitated his admirable example, and thus they lived in the most perfect union, and in the practice of all virtues.

Prayer, p. 500.

FORTY-FOURTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. GENERAL COUNCIL OF VIENNE. ST. ELIZABETH, ST. JOHN NEPOMUCEN. CONVERSION OF A PART OF TARTARY. CONVERSION OF LITHUANIA. (FOURTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. What General Council was held in the fourteenth century?

A. The General Council held in the fourteenth century was that of Vienne, in Dauphiné. It was the fifteenth Œcumenical Council. The Church therein displayed her solicitude for society, by condemning the heretics who were disturbing it, and by encouraging the sciences. Her sanctity shone at the same time on the throne, in the person of St. Elizabeth.

Q. Who was St. Elizabeth?

A. St. Elizabeth was queen of Portugal. She was a model of piety and charity, and so angelically meek that she had the happiness of re-establishing concord in her family, and winning her husband's heart to God.

Q. What sort of a life did she lead after the death of her husband?

A. After the death of her husband, her life shone with so many heroic virtues that she was an evident proof of the sanctity of the Catholic Church, to which the deaths of several Martyrs rendered a no less glorious testimony.

Q. Who were those Martyrs?

A. Those martyrs were three young Lithuanian noblemen, named Antony, John, and Eustachius, born in idolatry, but who, being converted, preferred to suffer death rather than eat meat on a day forbidden by the Church.

Q. Was there not another Martyr, still more celebrated?

A. There was another Martyr still more celebrated: he was St. John Nepomucen, canon of Prague, who died a martyr to the secrecy of confession.

Q. Did the blood of the Martyrs produce new Christians?

A. The blood of the Martyrs produced new Christians. A part of Tartary or Northern China, Bulgaria, and Lithuania, were converted to the Faith, and consoled the Church for the losses that she had sustained from heresy and from the Great Schism of the West.

Prayer, p. 509.

FORTY-FIFTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE. ST. VINCENT FERRER. FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF VOLUNTARY POOR. (FIFTEENTH CENTURY.)

Q. MENTION the principal enemies of the Church during the fifteenth century.

A. The principal enemies of the Church during the fifteenth century were, (1) Wickliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, who spread the most dangerous errors, and attacked the authority of the Church, the Sacraments, and the most holy practices; (2) the Great Schism of the West, which was continued; and (3) the *Renaissance*, or Revival of Paganism.

Q. What defenders did God give the Church?

A. The principal defenders whom God gave the Church were the Clergy of England, the Fathers of the Council of Constance, and, above all, St. Vincent Ferrer.

Q. Who was St. Vincent Ferrer?

A. St. Vincent Ferrer was a Spanish Dominican, so holy and eloquent that the Sovereign Pontiff appointed him Apostolic Preacher. During forty years he travelled through Spain, France, Piedmont, Germany, and England, moved all Europe, and converted a countless number of Jews, Mahometans, heretics, and sinners.

Q. What put an end to the great Schism of the West?

A. The Council of Constance, held in 1414, put an end to the great Schism of the West; and also, for wise reasons, suppressed Communion under the two kinds.

Q. How else did God come to the help of the Church?

A. God also came to the help of the Church by the establishment of thirty-seven Religious Orders or Congregations, intended to oppose true virtues to the false virtues of the heretics: such a one in particular was the Order of the Voluntary Poor.

Q. What did the Voluntary Poor do?

A. The Voluntary Poor renounced their property, took care of the sick, laboured much, and, instead of receiving any payment for their toil, preferred to expect their food from Providence and to live on alms.

Q. Who were the Penitents of Mercy?

A. The Penitents of Mercy or Black Penitents were pious Christians who consoled persons sentenced to death, and helped them to die well. They were first established at Rome. Confraternities of the same kind were afterwards formed in different parts of Christendom.

Prayer, p. 519.

FORTY-SIXTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF MINIMS. COUNCIL OF FLORENCE. DISCOVERY OF AMERICA. (FIFTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. Who was St. Francis of Paula?

A. St. Francis of Paula, one of the great consolers of the Church in the fifteenth century, was born in Italy. He retired into solitude, where he led a most austere life, and founded the Order of Minims.

Q. What was the object of this Order?

A. The object of this Order was to revive charity, almost extinct in the hearts of many Christians, and to repair scandalous violations of the laws of fasting and abstinence. It was on this account that the Minims added a vow of observing a Perpetual Lent.

Q. Where did St. Francis of Paula die?

A. St. Francis of Paula died in France, whither he had come by order of the Sovereign Pontiff to assist the sick king, Louis XI, who expired in his arms. His miracles and virtues, as well as those of his disciples, consoled the Church, and helped her to bear up against her new trials.

Q. What were those trials?

A. Those trials were, in the East, the conquests of the Turks, whose emperor, Mahomet II., took Constantinople, and reduced all Greece to slavery, and, in the West, the revival of paganism, the most dreadful trial that had befallen the Church from her cradle.

Q. Explain your answer.

A. After the taking of Constantinople, the schismatical Greeks sought refuge in Italy. They did special honour to pagan literature and philosophy, with which they intoxicated youth and soon all Europe.

Q. What was the result of their teaching?

A. The result of their teaching was to develop the spirit of pride and pleasure—the sources of heresy, of infidelity, of scandals, and of the revolutions that still afflict Europe.

Q. How did God come to the aid of the Church?

A. God came to the aid of the Church, (1) by means of the Knights of Malta, who conquered Mahomet; (2) by great Doctors, who fought against the rising paganism; and (3) by the General Council of Lateran, which put a brand on the new philosophy and literature.

Q. How did God indemnify the Church?

A. God indemnified the Church, (1) by the conversion of Samogitia, which was brought to the Faith by Jagellon, King of Poland; (2) by the preaching of the Gospel in the interior of Africa and in the Canary Islands; and (3) by the discovery of America, where the Gospel soon made rapid progress.

Prayer, p. 530.

FORTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. WAR BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND PROTESTANTISM. (SIXTEENTH CENTURY.)

Q. What did the war against the Church become in the sixteenth century?

A. In the sixteenth century, the war against the Church became more terrible than ever: it was carried on by Machiavelli, Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, and Henry VIII.

Q. Who was Machiavelli?

A. He was a Florentine civilian, who, brought up by the Greeks, endeavoured to propagate in Europe the principles of pagan government, and to destroy the reign of Our Lord over the nations. His works did no less evil to the Church than those of Luther and Calvin, whose precursor he was.

Q. Who was Luther?

A. Luther was an Augustinian monk in Germany. He broke his three vows, apostatised, married a nun, and set himself to declaim against the Church.

Q. What did he write before being condemned?

A. Before being condemned, he wrote to the Sovereign Pontiff that he would accept his decision as an oracle coming from the mouth of Jesus Christ.

Q. What did he do after his condemnation?

A. After his condemnation by Leo X., he burst out into abuse regarding him, the Bishops, and Catholic theologians in general, pretending that he alone was more enlightened than all the rest of the Christian world together. He continued to preach his errors, and, after a scandalous life, died on rising from a table at which he had, according to custom, gorged himself with meats and wine.

Q. Who was Zuinglius?

A. Zuinglius was Curé of Our Lady of Hermits, in Switzerland. He preached Luther's errors at Zurich, permitted all kinds of disorders, had the face to marry publicly, and was killed in a battle lost by his followers, though he had assured them of victory.

Q. Who was Calvin?

A. Calvin was an ecclesiastic of Noyon, but not a priest. He adopted the errors of Luther, added others of his own, and settled at Geneva, where he caused Michael Servetus to be burned for daring to contradict him, and died himself of a shameful disease.

Q. Who was Henry VIII?

A. Henry VIII. was King of England. Urged on by his passions, he wanted to have his lawful marriage annulled by the Sovereign Pontiff, who refused to comply with such a demand. The prince then declared himself the Head of Religion in England, and drew away his people into schism, and soon afterwards into heresy.

Q. Whence did Protestantism come?

A. Protestantism came from the *Renaissance*, or Revival of Paganism. "I laid the egg," Erasmus, one of the leaders of the *Renaissance*, used to say, "and Luther hatched it." All the reformers were brought up in the school of pagan authors.

Q. Is Protestantism, or the religion preached by Luther, Zuinglius, and Calvin, the true religion?

A. Protestantism is not the true religion. It is no religion at all, since we see, (1) that it was established by four great libertines; (2) that it had as its causes the pagan principles of insubordination, love of honours, love of the goods of others, love of sensual pleasures, love of things forbidden by the Gospel; (3) that it permits one to believe whatever he likes, and to do whatever he believes; and (4) that it produces endless evils.

Q. What are we to conclude hence?

A. We are to conclude hence that we ought to pray for those who have the misfortune of professing it, to distrust those who preach it, and to hold in horror the books that spread it.

Prayer, p. 548.

FORTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE BROTHERS OF ST. JOHN OF GOD AND THE JESUITS. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER. (SIXTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. How did God justify the Church from the reproaches that Protestants addressed to her?

A. God justified the Church from the reproaches that Protestants addressed to her by making her perform splendid works of charity, which proved that she was always the true Spouse of Jesus Christ.

Q. What were these works?

A. These works were, among many others, the foundation of new Religious Orders for the relief of the sick and the instruction of youth; and Missions, which gave a great number of Martyrs to Heaven.

Q. Mention some of the Religious Orders.

A. The first of the Religious Orders was that of St. John of God, whose members bind themselves by vow to take care of the insane. St. John of God, its founder, was born in Spain in 1495, became a soldier, and lost the fear of God; but he was soon converted, and devoted himself to the care of the sick.

Q. Mention another.

A. Another Order was that of the Jesuits, whose object is to instruct youth, and to convert heretics and infidels. Its members make a vow to go on the Mission wherever the Sovereign Pontiff pleases to send them.

Q. Who was its founder?

A. Its founder was St. Ignatius. St. Ignatius was a Spanish knight, wounded at the siege of Pampeluna the same year that Luther began to preach heresy. He was converted by reading some good books, consecrated himself to God, and went to Paris, where he founded the Religious Order of the *Society of Jesus*.

Q. Who was the great Missionary of the sixteenth century?

A. The great Missionary of the sixteenth century was St. Francis Xavier. St. Francis Xavier was a young Spanish nobleman, very distinguished by his talents. He was a professor of philosophy in Paris when St. Ignatius arrived there. The latter converted him by often repeating to him these words of Our Saviour: *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*

Q. What did Xavier do?

A. Xavier became a disciple of St. Ignatius, and went to preach the Faith in the Indies at the very moment when Germany, England, and a part of France, were losing the light of the Gospel.

Q. What was the success of St. Francis Xavier?

A. St. Francis Xavier converted a countless multitude of unbelievers in the Indies and Japan, and died when about to enter China, in 1552, at the age of forty-six years. His body was carried to Goa, where it remains uncorrupted.

Prayer, p. 562.

FORTY-NINTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. COUNCIL OF TRENT. ST. CHARLES BORROMEO, ST. TERESA. URSULINES. POOR OF THE MOTHER OF GOD. (END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.)

Q. Why was the Council of Trent assembled?

A. The Council of Trent, the eighteenth General Council, was assembled to condemn the heresies of Protestants, and to reform the morals of Catholics. The wise regulations which it made were put in practice in the various nations by great Saints whom God raised up: among others, St. Charles Borromeo.

Q. Who was St. Charles Borromeo?

A. St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, was a great restorer of ecclesiastical discipline, and a model of charity, of which he gave the most splendid proofs during the plague of Milan. While he was making virtue flourish again among the clergy, St. Teresa was doing the same in monasteries.

Q. Who was St. Teresa?

A. St. Teresa, the reformer of the Carmelite Order, was born in Spain, was brought up in piety, and was nearly lost by reading novels. Touched by the grace of God, she became a nun, led an angelic life, and revived the fervour of a great many old monasteries, while several new Religious Bodies were forming.

Q. What were those new Bodies?

A. Those new Religious Bodies were the Congregation of the Ursulines, the Order of the Poor of the Mother of God, and the Congregation of Our Lady.

Q. What was the Congregation of the Ursulines?

A. The Congregation of the Ursulines was one founded by the Blessed Angela of Brescia to bring back sinners to virtue, to instruct the ignorant, and to diffuse throughout the world the good odour of Jesus Christ.

Q. What was the Order of the Poor of the Mother of God?

A. The Order of the Poor of the Mother of God was one intended to instruct children in religion and in human knowledge. It was founded by St. Joseph Calasanctius, who was the first that opened public gratuitous schools for the poor.

Q. Who was the founder of the Congregation of Our Lady?

A. The founder of the Congregation of Our Lady was the Blessed Peter Fourrier, Curé of Mattaincourt, in Lorraine. His Order, established chiefly for the gratuitous education of poor little girls, continues to render very great services to the Church, as well as the Orders then established to relieve corporal miseries.

Q. Mention some of them.

A. (1) The *Infirmarian Brothers*, who devoted themselves to the care of the sick in hospitals; (2) the *Somasques*, who relieved all kinds of miseries; and (3) the *Brothers of a Good Death*—founded by St. Camillus of Lellis—who endeavoured to procure for the sick the grace of a good death, and made a vow never to quit the bedside of the plague-stricken.

Prayer, p. 580.

FIFTIETH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. ST. FRANCIS DE SALES. MISSIONS OF AMERICA AND THE LEVANT. ST. VINCENT DE PAUL. (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.)

Q. How did God punish the countries that had abandoned the Faith?

A. God punished the countries that had abandoned the Faith by terrible calamities; and, at the same time, consoled the Church by giving her a great Saint, destined to revive piety in the world, as St. Charles had revived it among the clergy and St. Teresa in the cloister.

Q. Who was this great Saint?

A. This great Saint was St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva. He was born in Savoy, of a noble family; showed from his very childhood a piety and a purity of morals that merited for him the special protection of the Blessed Virgin; and converted more than sixty thousand heretics.

Q. What Order did he found?

A. He founded, in concert with St. Jane Chantal, the Order of the Visitation, which still retains the spirit of piety, meekness, and charity that distinguished the most amiable Saint of latter times.

Q. What other consolations did God give the Church?

A. The other consolations which God gave the Church were the example of St. Vincent de Paul and the success of Missionaries. Some of these Missionaries formed in America the *Reductions of Paraguay*, where all the innocence of the Early Christians was soon to be seen shining forth again; others converted large provinces in the East.

Q. Where was St. Vincent de Paul born?

A. St. Vincent de Paul was born in Gascony, and spent his childhood in tending flocks; but God drew him forth from obscurity, and raised him to the priesthood.

Q. What happened to him after his ordination?

A. After his ordination, he was taken by the Turks, and carried away as a slave to Tunis. Here, he converted his master, and accompanied him back to Europe. Having returned to France, he applied himself to the relief of the miserable of every class, and founded a congregation to help them during his lifetime and after his death, namely, the good *Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.*

Q. What other Congregation did he found?

A. He also founded a Congregation of Missionaries, called *Lazarists*, to give spiritual aid to the poor inhabitants of country districts, and even to carry the Faith to infidels. He fed many provinces laid waste by famine and war; and of himself alone did more good than ever was dreamt of by all our philosophers.

Prayer, p. 595.

FIFTY-FIRST LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. MARTYRS OF JAPAN. ORDERS OF LA TRAPPE AND REFUGE. (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. HAD the Church any Martyrs during the seventeenth century?

A. The Church had Martyrs during the seventeenth century: the most illustrious were those of Japan, where St. Francis Xavier and his successors had converted a great many of the inhabitants.

Q. At what period did the persecution reach its height?

A. The persecution became most violent in 1622; but the Christians showed a wonderful ardour for martyrdom.

Q. Give some instances.

A. A poor woman sold her girdle, so as to have something to buy a stake to which she might be fastened, and burned alive for the Faith; and children of four or five years amazed their executioners by their constancy.

Q. What heresy attacked the Church at this time?

A. The heresy that attacked the Church at this time was that of Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, who maintained in a work of his that man is not free, and that some of the Commandments of God cannot be kept.

Q. How was the Church defended?

A. The Church was defended against the Jansenists—whose leaders were Arnauld, Nicole, and Quesnel—by two illustrious French Bishops, Bossuet and Fenelon; and, to expiate the outrages done to good morals by scandalous sinners, God brought into existence a new Congregation.

Q. What Congregation was this?

A. It was the Congregation of La Trappe, founded by a young ecclesiastic named Armand de Rancé. While the life of the Trappists, more angelic than human, was expiating the crimes of the world, God opened an asylum for penitent women.

Q. What was this asylum?

A. This asylum was the Order of Our Lady of Refuge, which received unfortunate women, and also women of spotless virtue, so that the former might not be too much humbled.

Q. What other foundations consoled the Church?

A. Many other foundations consoled the Church: among them, that of the Order of Perpetual Adoration, intended to repair the outrages done to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and that of the Congregation of the Sisters of Nevers, devoted to the education of children and the relief of corporal miseries.

Prayer, p. 611.

FIFTY-SECOND LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. FOUNDATION OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND THE ORDER OF OUR HOLY REDEEMER. MISSIONS IN CHINA AND AMERICA. (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.)

Q. How was the Church attacked in the eighteenth century?

A. In the eighteenth century, the Church was attacked by libertinism, Jansenism, and philosophy.

Q. How did God come to the aid of the Faith?

A. God came to the aid of the Faith by raising up great Doctors, who refuted the apostles of error, and many Religious Congregations for the instruction of youth: among the number, that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Q. Who was its founder?

A. Its founder was the Abbé De La Salle, a Canon of Rheims, who gave the Brothers some rules far superior to all those laid down by worldly men for the education of youth. This Congregation helped much towards the preservation of the Faith among the people during the last century, which witnessed the birth of another in Italy for the defence and propagation of the truth.

Q. What was this new Order?

A. This new Order was that of Our Most Holy Redeemer, founded by St. Alphonsus Mary Liguori, Bishop of Agatha, in the kingdom of Naples. God evidently sent him to defend the truth against the wicked, and to raise a barrier against Jansenism, which was changing the true principles of morals, and drying up the fountains of piety by frightening people away from the Sacraments.

Q. Did impiety also make some conquests?

A. Impiety also made some conquests, especially in France; but, to indemnify the Church, French Missionaries converted a great many persons in China: among others, a branch of the imperial family, which displayed in time of persecution the courage of the Early Christians.

Q. What were the other conquests of the Faith?

A. The other conquests of the Faith were the conversion and civilisation of many savage tribes in America, especially that of the Illinois.

Q. What was the characteristic of these savages before their conversion?

A. The characteristic of these savages before their conversion was a delight in the most revolting barbarity. They used to eat such persons as they made prisoners, after tearing off their nails, cutting off their fingers and ears, and roasting them at a slow fire. Once converted, they became gentle, hospitable, and most pious.

Prayer, p. 623.

FIFTY-THIRD LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. APOLOGISTS FOR RELIGION MADAME LOUISA OF FRANCE. (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, CONTINUED.)

Q. Did the Church enjoy her conquests in peace?

A. The Church did not enjoy her conquests in peace. She was attacked by impious men, known under the name of philosophers, who, developing the evil principles of Paganism, denied the best established truths and the most sacred duties.

Q. What else did they do?

A. They also formed a league against Religion, and endeavoured to show it at variance with science; but they could not succeed. The most famous of these philosophers were Voltaire and Rousseau.

Q. What was the life of Voltaire?

A. The life of Voltaire was unworthy, not only of a Christian, but even of an honest man. Having left college, he was banished by his father, and afterwards thrown into prison; he cheated one bookseller, and ruined another; in short, he gave himself up to all the corruption of his heart and all his hatred against Religion till his death, which occurred in 1778.

Q. What was his death?

A. His death was that of despair. He might often be heard repeating in his rage these dreadful words: *I am abandoned by God and men!* He had asked for a Priest, but his friends would not admit one to him.

Q. Who was Rousseau?

A. John James Rousseau was born in Geneva, gave himself up to theft from his childhood, abjured Protestantism in order to embrace the Catholic Religion, which he renounced in order to return to Protestantism, and lived for twenty-five years a public libertine.

Q. How did he die?

A. He ended his career by a death worthy of his life: he committed suicide.

Q. By whom were Voltaire and Rousseau refuted?

A. Voltaire and Rousseau were ably refuted by Bergier, Nonotte, Bullet, and Guénée, who vindicated the truth, while Providence opposed to the crimes engendered by philosophy some great victims of expiation.

Q. Who was the principal victim?

A. The principal victim of expiation was Madame Louisa of France—a daughter of Louis XV.—who, in the bloom of youth, left the palace of rsailles in order to join the Carmelites of St. Denis. Here she spent days in prayer, fasting, and all the other austerities of penance.

Prayer, p. 637.

FIFTY-FOURTH LESSON.

CHRISTIANITY PRESERVED AND PROPAGATED. THE CLERGY OF FRANCE. MARTYRS OF THE REVOLUTION. MISSION OF COREA. (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. CONTINUED.)

Q. What were the sufferings of the Church at the close of the eighteenth century?

A. The sufferings of the Church at the close of the eighteenth century were schism, persecution, scandal, and the re-establishment of paganism in society and in religion.

Q. Explain your answer.

A. The Revolution wanted to make a Church according to its own ideas, and drew up a schismatical formula, known under the name of the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*, requiring all Priests to take an oath of fidelity thereto.

Q. What did it do next?

A. It next proceeded to slaughter such Priests and Bishops as refused: among its victims were the holy Archbishop of Arles and the venerable Abbé Fenelon, the father of orphans. Such as it did not lead to the scaffold, it threw into loathsome prisons, fed on bread and water, loaded with insults, and at length sentenced to transportation.

Q. What else did impiety do?

A. After destroying the worship of the true God, it re-established the worship of the devil, set up infamous women on altars, renewed the feasts of the pagans, and built temples to idols.

Q. Was it satisfied?

A. It was not satisfied, and, in its rage against the Church, it attacked the Holy Father, Pius VI., who was led, at the age of eighty years, from prison to prison, as far as Valence in Dauphiné, where he expired in consequence of the ill treatment that he had received.

Q. How did God avenge His Church?

A. God avenged His Church by sending on France a deluge of evils, such as had never been seen before, and sweeping away her persecutors, like the tyrants of the early ages, by a horrible death: most of them lost their heads on the scaffold; others were devoured by dogs or gnawed away by worms.

Q. What were the consolations of the Church?

A. The Church was consoled, (1) by the miraculous election of a new Pope, whose great abilities saved the barque of Peter amid the storms that threatened it; (2) by the conversion of a very large number of Protestants; and (3) by the rapid propagation of the Faith in America, and in Corea.

Prayer, p. 674.

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